

RECORD OF WORTENIA WAR

ウォルテニア 戦記



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RECORD OF WORTENIA WAR

— Wortenia Senki —

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[Hasutsuki]

コイルと呼ばれた少年は
自分の名前を亮真が

呼んだ事に驚いたのだろう。

「あ、あの……俺……」

お礼の言葉を口にできず

戸惑うコイルに

亮真はもう一度優しく笑いかける。

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出発!

その声に従い、一団が
城塞都市イピロスの北門を抜け、
一路ウォルテニア半島へ歩み始める。
百や二百ではきかない人数が、
無言のまま街道を進む。



引き絞られた弓から矢が放たれるが如く、
咲夜の命に忍達は静かに駆け出した。



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WORLD MAP of 《RECORD OF WORTENIA WAR》



西方大陸 地図



Chapter 15

The Ways To Learn Magic Arts 1

Day 17th, 9th Month, the Year 2812, Western continent calendar.

“Oraa! All of you, don't stop swinging!”

“Hey you! Your swing is too weak, put more power into it! Imagine that the enemy is bigger, stronger and better equipped than you are. You need to beat them with only your sword!”

With almost 20 children swinging and practicing their swordplay, the ground around each of them was soaked with their sweat and the tension was huge.

After lunch ended, a whole two hours had already passed.

A little bit farther from the place they were training, even from their location, another group of kids could be seen practicing their sword skills as well.

The strategy was to divide the children into groups and have the members of the Red Lion mercenaries teach and drill them.

A faint roar could be heard across the plain, it was exactly the kind of words needed for the children to find their motivation.

“Young master might be kind, but that does not mean that slacking off is permitted! In the battlefield, one mistake could cost you your life! If you desire power you must work hard! Swing your sword with the intent to kill! Imagine that the person you hate the most is standing right before you! Hold nothing back, you must have no fear in order to surpass your limits!”

A strong but obvious tactic was to use battlecries, they heightened one's morale while striking fear into the enemy.

Even in training, one also had to control their emotions to control their adrenaline, as it could lead to mistakes and ultimately, death. It could also lead to fatigue, which played a huge part in the number of deaths an army suffered.

Understanding that, the mercenaries who became the children's trainers, raised their voices the moment fatigue was noticeable on their faces.

“Mike, how is it?”

“Oh?! Young master! Out on a patrol are ya? Alright everyone, let's take a break! But, make sure not let your body get cold!”

Mike's intense expression immediately relaxed after the training was suspended. Although Mike was a nice guy, he knew it was for the better to raise his voice towards the children because he understood that his hard work would one day decide their fate.

He knew, that if he spoiled the children and gave them an easy time, he wouldn't be suitable for coaching the kids.

For the sake of raising the children's skills and endurance, he would not mind if he was detested by them.

To respond to the young master's question, Mike thought about his training regimen.

“Hmm... It seems like there's no problem. In a month's time they have already learned so much and starting tomorrow we plan to teach them useful magic arts. Will that be satisfactory with you?”

A month ago Ryouma instructed the children to form 5-man squads and to have four of those squads gather together as a small brigade.

Finally to complete the set-up he chose a member of the Red Lions to lead each brigade.

To ensure a proper teaching, Ryouma gave Lione and Bolts the position of overseers and directed the idle mercenaries that were not leading any brigades to assist with the training.

Ryouma, thinking carefully about the training, made the Red Lion mercenaries the leaders as they were experienced in cooperation and teamwork. He considered that those who abandoned individuality and performed well with others would have a higher survival rate than others.

This could be seen from Elena's achievements.

By abandoning her individuality, in her time within the knight corps, she became known as 'Rozeria's white goddess of war'.

In other words, they would be more efficient and safer while fighting as units compared to fighting individually. This was the difference between a soldier and a warrior.

That being the case then, those who from the start were taught how to cooperate would undoubtedly perform better in that regard.

Of course, they had to learn the basic and personal skills as well, but for the sake of efficiency they focused on one thing at a time.

By dividing 1 brigade into 4 squads of 5 people each, then making them live in the same place, having the same meals, and sleeping together, it would create a sense of solidarity growing among them.

With solidarity growing within their consciousness, it would strengthen their unity and will to mutually protect each other. Along with that, the quality of the soldiers would inevitably also increase.

That is what Ryouma was aiming for. Afterwards, it would be just a matter of how much they could learn of the fundamentals within one month.

"Hmm, let's see... I've also already talked with Bolts and Nee-san, I think it's coming along well? I've also talked with the others, and their results seem to also be quite favorable... As long we don't take the faces they're making into consideration, I guess it is tolerable?"

The distrust and anxiety from the children hadn't been dispelled yet, but it could be felt a lot less now compared to the first time.

They were now regularly eating delicious food and wearing clean clothes. They now had beds where they could sleep inside tents, which while not being really that comfortable, were also a far cry from the treatment they got before they were sold to Ryouma.

And the most important thing was that they were all released from the previously

constant fear of being flogged.

They at least understood that they wouldn't get struck with a whip for no discernible reason.

The evidence for that was in the children's eyes, which showed no fear towards Mike.

They understood that their leader and instructor looked at them as peers despite raising an angry voice every time he addressed them.

This was a point that Ryouma insisted on before starting the training.

Fortunately, the Red Lion mercenary group consisted of people with a commoner background, which made it easier for them to understand Ryouma's goal.

If they had been knights or nobles, they would have, without a doubt, laughed when presented with similar instructions.

"I see... It seems like everyone's doing well... And looking at the way they swing their swords, they seem to be fine..."

"Indeed. We did teach them carefully after all. Without a doubt, we have met our first objective and did so within a month..."

They were all holding swords meant for adults, purchased from the Mistel firm.

After meeting with Earl Salzberg he managed to form a commercial relationship with them.

After one month, and as a result of enjoying adequate meals and adequate sleeping, and undergoing moderate training, the bodies of these children started to develop some muscles.

Of course, it was not something drastic, but even if little by little, they were surely growing up. Their stance would no longer crumble after just a few swings of the heavy sword.

At the time when the slave merchants delivered these children, their bodies were skinny because of their poor diet, but it turned out the merchants did not lie when they said that they had brought him healthy slaves.

“And the effectiveness of giving them candy after training... As expected, their enthusiasm becomes high with rewards dangling in front of their eyes.”

“I see... Well, sweets are not something that commoners can easily get their hands on after all... I guess this is all proceeding according to the plan.”

“Well, they do not yet need money after all... That's why I don't think giving them such rewards is a bad move...”

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At the end of the training, a small candy ball would be distributed as a reward by the teachers.

Based on the teachers' judgment, those who worked harder compared to the others would get two.

This kind of system where everybody got one unless they played truant, seemed to be very effective for children.

It made the children not necessarily compare each other's results, while also giving something extra to those who worked harder and thus raise their motivation.

In this world, where sugar was expensive, sweets were a luxury good that even commoners rarely could afford.

Yet, Ryouma purchased the candy balls from Epiroz and distributed them to the children. And the effect was truly dramatic.

Back in Ryouma's world, one couldn't motivate children with only candy balls, but in this underdeveloped world, it was a splendid bait.

"Is that so? Well, I guess it was a worthy investment. It would have been a big loss if the effect did not come out well... Alright then, Mike, from tomorrow onwards we're going to teach them magic arts."

"Yes, sir! Please leave it to me."

In addition to the expenses needed to cover the basic needs for this number of people, the price paid for the candy balls was also pretty high.

However, it seemed like the effect was well worth the investment.

Ryouma then left the place after receiving Mike's vigorous reply.

(All of them show a reasonably good result... Afterwards, it will depend on the results of magic arts lessons... I also need to tell Laura about my training that's starting tomorrow...)

Magic arts was also something unknown for Ryouma. He himself needed to master magic arts before he could go ahead with the rest of his plans.

In order to survive in the Wortenia peninsula, he needed to master as many skills as possible.



The next day, the Marfisto sisters came to Ryouma's tent right after breakfast.

They seemed to be very happy that Ryouma asked them to teach him magic arts. Their faces' were already brimming with smiles.

"Ryouma-sama, we will start the magic arts lesson, is that alright?"

"Sure... I'm sorry for all the trouble..."

Ryouma lowered his head towards the sisters.

At least, in regard to magic arts, Ryouma would be their disciple. It was natural for him to maintain proper etiquette since the sisters would be his mentors.

Seeing that, Sara wanted to say something about it but Laura shook her head telling her not to say anything.

She probably felt bewildered that their master was actually bowing before them, who were his subordinates.

However, both sisters also understood why Ryouma was doing something like that.

He was someone who would never let his mind be swallowed by arrogance and always kept a low profile. Such behavior for him was a perfectly natural thing.

"Alright then... Let's get started. Ryouma-sama, do you still remember our explanation regarding magic arts?"

The sisters let Ryouma sit in the center of the tent.

Normally, on the first day of learning, they would have to explain the things regarding magic arts, but since Ryouma was already told about the basic theory, the sisters wanted to review the things he knew first.

“There are three magic types, one that requires chanting, a battle magic that does not require chanting, and endowment magic that can be used to bestow magic unto things.”

When the three of them wandered around the continent, the sisters taught him about magic arts.

At that time, he did not acquire the magic arts themselves and only learned about the theory behind them because he was more often than not on the road, and they didn't stay put in any one place for long.

“That is right. All magic arts consume Prana to activate their effects.”

Following Laura's explanation, Ryouma nodded his head. This also he already knew.

“Spirit Prana is an energy that exists within all life forms. That is why any human supposedly should be able to use them.”

“Right... That's why we also make the children learn about it too, right?”

A technique that everyone could use. A technique was not affected by gender or age.

“That is correct. Most people with a teacher should be able to master the basics within four months, more than that can be considered as a late bloomer. Well, even when one only learned the basics, that one's strength already cannot be compared to that of people who have not learnt them.”

“Right, Just like you said, I do not think I will be able to learn all of it perfectly in just 4 months. What I was hoping for is to be able to use even the most basic magic arts. Even being able to use only the basics, one child will be able to work just like 2 or 3 adults together.”

Separately, Ryouma had no intention to use magic arts for bellic purposes only. After all, even children would be able to do the heavy lifting equivalent of several adults if they were to use magic arts.

Carrying tree logs; carrying large stones; building houses; those and many other uses

were there for it.

That's why Ryouma had no intention to let such abilities sit by idly. Even if such a way of thinking could be considered as heretic in this world.

In this world, it was told that magic arts were a technique passed down by one of the Gods.

The Light God, Meneoz.

He was one of the six pillars amongst the Gods who built this world. These 6 were the existences known as the main Gods.

And magic arts were said to be the technique and power given directly by this God.

For Ryouma, it did not matter whether this was true or not.

In this western continent, there was a group called the Church of the Light God. This organization spread the myth as the truth, and the problem was that they had a huge amount of believers following their teachings.

During the civil war, a few months prior, Ryouma used magic arts to build a camp. For Ryouma, such techniques could only be regarded as convenient, even when used for civil engineering purposes. However, the reaction of the people around him was surprising, they looked at Ryouma as someone weird.

If the reason hadn't been to build an advanced camp for the goal of quickly defeating their enemies, the knights would have without a doubt refused to do as asked.

Neither the mercenaries nor the commoners would have a problem with it, but for the aristocracy and the royalty who were privileged classes, such a mindset of using magic arts for everything was akin to a can of worms that they did not want to be opened.

According to them, the 'fact' that the magic arts were bestowed upon them was the very proof that they had the right to rule over the rest of the people.

And because they also thought that such power should only be used for self-defense, it became limited to combat uses.

When he heard that, Ryouma felt a strong contradiction in the idea of a sacred power given by God being limited to be used only for fighting. But then again, religion was an

irrational thing to begin with.

And Ryouma had no intention to waste time nor energy discussing religious views.

For him, the problem was whether or not it had value and utility.

If it was something he couldn't use for his purposes, then he would simply ignore it.

And for Ryouma, who was an otherworlder in the first place, there was no reason for him to respect this world's Gods.

For him, God was simply a tool. That was why he would just consider whether that God was something he could use or not. That was what Ryouma had in his mind.

The Marfisto sisters then walked towards Ryouma's back.

“Well then, we will start the preliminary training then...”

“Yes, please go ahead.”

Ryouma nodded his head, and as he was told beforehand, he sat on the ground in a cross-legged position.

Then the sisters' palm touched Ryouma's back.

““Here we go!”“

After the sisters said that, Ryouma could feel something hot being poured on his back. The sensation gradually rose upwards from the sisters' hands and spread around his body.

Ryouma also felt that something was crawling up within his body, giving him a shivering experience.

“Take a deep breath. Then slowly release it... Calm your mind, and relax your body... Do you feel a hot sensation from the back?”

Ryouma lightly nodded his head in response to Laura's question. He then relaxed his body and mind letting his consciousness take in the hot sensation, in order to control it as it began to spread around his body with his own will.

Chapter 16

The Ways To Learn Magic Arts 2

Day 18th, 9th Month, the Year 2812, Western continent calendar.

“Khu! My body feels like it is on fire...”

Ryouma's face was distorted while he groaned in pain.

He only muttered in a small voice. However, the fact that Ryouma, who usually hid how he felt, was showing a pained expression, indicated just how much pain he was currently enduring.

At first, he only felt a warm feeling from where the sisters touched him, but the warmth was suddenly switched into intense heat.

Ryouma desperately withstood the pain while trying not to jump from his position.

Because he bit his lips too hard while enduring the agony he felt, a taste of blood began to spread within his mouth.

“Right now, we're channeling our Prana into Ryouma-sama's body. Please bear with it for a while, and also, try to control the heat within your body.”

Following Sara's words, Ryouma tried to heighten his consciousness.

The Prana poured by the sisters began to encroach Ryouma's body little by little.

Five minutes had passed. Ryouma now felt as if he was burning from head to toe.

Due to his sweat, his clothes and even the blanket he had laid down on were soaking wet.

“How is it? Is Ryouma-sama able to keep going? Please inform us if Ryouma-sama becomes unable to endure it anymore, alright?”



The sisters began to show a pained expression.

The reason for that was because, as long as Ryouma was unable to control the energy that had been awakened inside his body, the sisters had to continue pouring more into him.

Such an act was just like pouring water into a bucket with a huge hole in it.

The question now was whether the sisters would exhaust their Prana first, or if Ryouma would be able to control the Prana within his body first.

“Yes... I'm fine... I can still keep going, please continue.”

The moment he opened his mouth, a drop of sweat fell down from the tip of his nose.

At the moment, due to massive perspiration, Ryouma's body was in dire need of water.

Despite having trained his body thoroughly for a long time, he had never felt so badly cornered before. However, he couldn't unreservedly stop and withdraw here.

If he were to stop now, he would need the sisters to pour their Prana again tomorrow.

(Gaies... Kyle... There should be at least a fragment of life force from those whom I've killed inside my body... I can do this... Begin to rotate my chakra!)

Ryouma tried to imagine channeling the hot feeling towards his lower abdomen

He then tried to awaken the Muladhara chakra inside his body.

The basics of magic arts were to strengthen one's body.

After being able to feel the existence of Prana and use it for martial arts; the second stage was to then learn the magic arts that required chanting; and the last stage would be learning how to use magic arts to endow magic on things.

After all, the way to use chanting magic arts or to enchant something was a little bit different.

Being able to control the life energy inside one's body, did not mean that one could control the life energy released outside of the body.

Like this, in order for him to master the first stage, he needed to accomplish three things.

1. Being able to feel and recognize Prana inside his body.
2. Being able to awaken his Muladhara(root) chakra with his Prana.
3. Then being able to stop the rotation of Muladhara chakra by his own will.

Being able to use magic arts, meant being able to awaken the chakras inside one's body.

By rotating the chakra wheel, a person would be able to exert more power from their body. And the more chakra rings awakened, the more power that person would get.

Within the human body, there are 7 chakra wheels. And right now, Ryouma was trying to awaken and rotate the chakra wheel called Muladhara(root) by borrowing the sisters' life force.

(Feel... Something is different... I can feel something is moving around within my body... Is this Prana?)

Something that was sleeping inside his body began to awake thanks to the twins' triggering it by pouring their own Prana.

Ryouma desperately tried to control the life force that was currently moving violently inside his body. It felt like trying to control a beast.

Then the sisters sensed some kind of resistance while pouring their Prana into Ryouma's body. The moment they felt that, the sisters immediately took off their hands from Ryouma's body.

"How is it?"

"Yeah... I can feel it... It felt like a beast rampaging inside my body..."

Ryouma answered Sara who was feeling worried.

Right now, Ryouma's Muladhara chakra was rotating violently due to the injection of energy.

If Ryouma had relaxed his body and stopped being careful he might have actually jumped towards the sisters like a hungry beast.

The desire for battles, the desire to harm people, the desire to kill people.

Such desires were overflowing within Ryouma's mind and heart.

Normally desire was something that was always being connected with something called reason.

(Calm down... Take a deep breath, then breathe out...)

However, Ryouma's body wasn't listening to him and began to retaliate.

His muscles started to move involuntarily, and his heart started beating faster. The sensation he experienced at that time was as if all of his senses had been awakened.

After looking at Ryouma's condition for a bit, the Marfisto sisters nodded towards each other and then left the tent. Because there was nothing they could do other than waiting for now.



"How is the boy's condition? I want to report that the children's training has finished for today. Is it alright for me to enter?"

"Lione-san... Not yet, Ryouma-sama is still training inside..."

Lione then told the sisters how the training for the children had gone and that it had finished successfully for today.

Today's training ended after they taught the 320 children the basics of knowledge about magic arts and pouring Prana into all of the children's bodies.

However, the person Lione wanted to report to had not yet finished his own training.

Knowing that, Lione then nodded towards the sisters.

"...It seems like he took a lot of time... You guys started before noon right?"

Looking at the position of the sun, they could tell it was already past three o'clock.

“Yes... We were going at it for around 5 hours...”

Hearing Sara's words, Lione showed a surprised expression.

“Then, for you guys to be outside right now, his ring chakra is...”

“Still rotating...”

An uneasy expression appeared on Laura's face.

Lione also began to frown.

They both were concerned about the same thing.

“For five hours... I guess that was because he has a lot of life force from the people and creatures he has killed... No wonder we've finished our training first... It can't be helped then... But still, five hours, huh?”

Although the learning method was the same, the prerequisites for the training were very different between Ryouma and the children.

Not to mention the total life force the individual had previously absorbed.

The amount of Prana within the children's bodies that had no experience of taking the lives of other people or creatures was the amount that was originally already inside of their bodies.

On the other hand, Ryouma had killed a lot of human beings and many monsters. As a result of this, he had been absorbing part of his victims' life force, and therefore the amount of Prana within his body was nearly twice as much as that of an ordinary man.

Commonly, it would be considered that the more energy one had the better. However, for someone who had just begun to learn how to control it, this was not necessarily the case, since too much of it could become disadvantageous at this point.

In other words, it had now become more difficult for him to control his Prana.

That was the general knowledge that everyone knew. They had also advised Ryouma about it, but he chose to dismiss their misgivings.

The reason for that, was because no one could guarantee that Ryouma's chakra wheel would naturally awaken.

“Well, I guess we don't have any other choice but to move forward since we've already come this far, huh..... By the way, how about you guys take some rest? Both of you have been using a lot of Prana, right? I will watch over the boy, so you guys can relax and have something to eat.”

Lione looked at the two sisters with a gentle gaze.

“Thank you for your concern... But if that's the case, Lione-san should take some rest as well...”

“My elder sister is right. Lione-san too, has been pouring Prana into the children up until a little while ago, right?”

Hearing the two sisters' response, Lione laughed out loudly.

“Oh dear... Did you guys forget? I've only poured my Prana into six children you know? Unlike the boy, it was quite easy to pour one's Prana into the children's bodies.”

Indeed, Lione did not show any fatigue at all.

That was also a proof that Ryouma's life force was enormous compared to the children's.

“It's fine! You girls should take some rest now...”

Dosha

A sound as if something falling could be heard from within the tent.

The three of them immediately rushed into the tent.

““Ryouma-sama!”“ “Boy!”

In front of them, Ryouma was laying face down.

“He's fine... It seems like he just lost his consciousness... Laura how about you prepare his bed for now? And Sara, go and fetch some water!”

His pulse was normal. Judging that he had lost his consciousness due to dehydration and fatigue, Lione immediately ordered the sisters to set things up for him.

“Understood!”, “I will immediately prepare it!”

Even though they were exhausted, the sisters immediately got going.

“For the love of the Gods... After I told him to do the training in moderation, he ended up like this...”

After Lione judged that there was no danger to Ryouma's life, she uttered such words in a low voice.

Lione herself understood that they did not have much time.

It was fine for Ryouma to be unable to use magic arts since the others could just back him up. There was no need for him to work this hard.

But despite wanting to chide Ryouma for his impatience, Lione was actually feeling happy inside.

Ryouma who was their leader worked hard to learn how to use magic arts.

That meant that he was trying to step onto the same stage as Lione and the others. Ready to soak his hands with blood, both his own and his enemies’.

Although Lione had only known Ryouma for a short while, she already understood his personality.

Looking at him in his current state, it showed just how much Ryouma was preparing to face what was to come.

(Ryouma... I'm glad that I've met you... If it's you... I'm sure you can change it... I'm sure you can change the fate of all of us...)

The fate of the mercenaries would often be to end up being betrayed by their clients

or getting killed on the battlefield. Either way, mercenaries were people without bright prospects.

Only a few mercenaries managed to live long enough to meet their grandchildren.

That was why they were mostly not afraid of death. This did not mean that they liked dying in vain, either.

If it was unavoidable, they would at least want to find a good place to die.

(If it's you... If it's for your sake...)

Lione gently stroked the hair of the boy who was currently fainted in her arms. Just like a little baby.

Chapter 17

Eastern Invasion 1

Early 10th Month, the Year 2812, Western continent calendar.

Around the time Mikoshiba Ryouma was learning the way to master the magic arts, the clouds of war were covering the skies of the neighboring country, the Kingdom of Zalda.

The Ortomean Empire, the sovereign of the Western continent's central regions, finally bared its fangs and started the invasion of the eastern parts of the continent.

One side fought for the sake of development and hegemony. The other fought for their very survival.

Set on the Notiz plains bordering the two countries, the battle where defeat wasn't an option for either side was about to start.



“What's the status?”

At the imperial invading army's headquarters, Sardina glanced over the huge map spread in front of her.

On the map, red and black coloured pieces were arranged in some sort of formation.

“According to the report, the main force is progressing en route as planned, Your Highness. The report also mentioned that three of our vanguard troops are facing against the Zaldian Royal Knights at the east of the Notiz plains.”

Saying so, Saitou repositioned the red pieces facing against one of the black pieces at the east of the Notiz plains from three directions.

These pieces represented the friendly and enemy units.

The red pieces represented the empire's forces, while the black ones represented the kingdom's.

The number of red pieces placed in the center was 15. Five were placed far away to the north and five more the south.

Each piece represented a troop of 1000 soldiers, which meant that around 25,000 soldiers were deployed on the field on their side.

"What about the enemy?"

Saitou arranged the black pieces near the border between the Notiz plains and the mountain area.

The number of pieces was 20.

"An army, composed only of knights, they number about 20,000"

Following Saitou's words, Sardina lifted the corners of her mouth.

She smiled like a hunter who was convinced that her prey had fallen into her trap.

"Good... They seem to have moved the entirety of the forces under direct command of their king... Just as planned."

"Well, Your Highness, we have been doing our best to create the situation where they do not have any other choice after all..."

Following Sardina's words, Saitou replied while shrugging his shoulders.

"Only five days have passed since we declared war... Which means, there wasn't enough time for them to properly recruit soldiers."

As a result of their successful efforts at information manipulation, the Kingdom of Zalda was unable to grasp the movements of the imperial army.

The kingdom had a mountainous area that served as their natural protection.

However, much like this time, if they failed to notice the advances of their enemy's

army, their natural barrier could very well turn into a liability instead.

The area where the steep mountains were located was a treasure that yielded abundant ore mines, but was an unsuitable locality for placing soldiers.

Deploying an army there without any preparation and strong positioning would only cause a disaster.

“On purpose, we leaked the numbers of our main force, coupled with the limited time they had, it forced them to mobilize the Royal Knights in haste with no other support, and draw them towards an open field.”

Sardina praised Saitou's ingenious scheme from the bottom of her heart.

Even though she was an Imperial Princess of the Ortomean Empire, she also had great talent for leading armies to war.

The enemy side reluctantly understood this fact all too well as well.

The Kingdom of Zalda's total military force numbered approximately 70,000. However, that also included the conscripted commoners and the nobles' soldiers.

The force that the Zaldians could mobilize in such short notice was the combatants under direct royal command, which numbered approximately 25,000 men.

Having failed to grasp the enemy's movements, led to having no time to arrange the nobles' soldiers and to conscript the commoners, which in turn led to having only a third of their actual strength to stop the foreign invaders.

Zalda's military command was caught by surprise and ended up being impatient. They then desperately endeavored to gather any and all information available regarding the enemy's forces in order to find a breakthrough for their current predicament.

They tried to find out about the enemy's general, their number of soldiers, the enemy's expected advance route...

They also gathered innumerable bits of other information. Then they analyzed them and devised some measures. By then, they noticed something.

The 'fact' that the size of armed forces under Sardina's command was not so large, and that even if they could mobilize the army under the King's command alone, they could

still expect to come out of it victorious.

At first, the Zaldian military command was thinking of pulling the Ortomean army into their country and dealing with them in their own turf. However, there was a big flaw to that strategy: if the war was fought within the Zaldians' territory, then even if they won, the consequences would still be quite drastic.

Even after taking into consideration the sacrifices that would be made if that were to happen they were going to go ahead with it until they received the momentous report that the contingent that Sardina led appeared to not be large. This made them change their plans in consequence.

If they presented battle in the open fields near the border, the kingdom's territory and population wouldn't need to suffer too much.

No one likes losing.

Besides, the creature known as human always chooses the option where they don't lose anything if the option is presented.

The Kingdom of Zalda's military command then took their army towards the Notiz plains while leaving 5,000 knights behind as reserve.

However, little did they know, that it was Sardina who made them think like that. The 'truth' that they knew would go on to become the lie that would eventually defeat them.

"What about our detached forces to the north and the south? It's going forward as planned, right?"

Sardina turned her sharp gaze towards Saitou.

For now, the trap her side had set was working perfectly.

However, Sardina understood from her experience, that a small carelessness could turn everything upside down.

That was why she always did her best to be cautious.

The experience she got from going through many battlefields, and the setback and lesson she had learned from Ryouma made Sardina grow into a meticulous yet daring

military leader, into what could be considered an ideal commander.

“Yes, Your Highness. We have been informed that both units are waiting for our orders and in position.”

Hearing Saitou's report, Sardina felt satisfied. She smiled and nodded her head.

“Good... Then execute the next phase, you remember the arrangement right, Saitou?”

“Yes, Your Highness. Please leave it to me.”

Saitou's tone of voice was the same as ever.

A calm and polite tone. He bowed towards Sardina and left the tent.

People could hardly believe that such a polite and calm man was about to head towards the battlefield.

However, Sardina could clearly feel Saitou's hidden fighting spirit.

Within the eyes he used to gaze at her, Sardina could see violent flames raging.



“Is everyone ready?”

Saitou mounted his horse then called out to the surrounding officers.

““““Yes, sir!”““““

Short and powerful words entered Saitou's ears.

The heavy knights under his command stood behind him. They numbered 10,000 men.

Only 2,000 men were left behind to protect Sardina.

They reduced her guard to the bare minimum. This was a gamble, where they bet the entire battle in this one move.

This battle, this war, and the future of the invasion, all of it now rested on Saitou's shoulders.

Before Saitou's eyes, the advance troops were fighting against the Zalda kingdom in a bitter struggle.

“Commander. Please give us your order, sir.”

<EN: He's the second-in-command of the army, so when soldiers talk to him, they refer to him as deputy general, or in this case, since he's leading a unit in battle, just commander.>

One of Saitou's adjutants asked him.

Saitou then unsheathed his sword and pointed towards the sky.

Everyone silently waited for what would happen next.

All of them stood by while feeling elated. Saitou stayed silent for a few seconds.

And then after feeling the fighting spirit of the soldiers behind him, Saitou dropped his sword silently and pointed it toward the enemy.

““““Oraaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!”““““

The soldiers then run past Saitou while raising a battle cry.

Bows were drawn taut following which, arrows were released.

The knights, on their fearsome steeds, rushed towards the enemy.

The knights were wearing heavy armours of steel, covering their entire bodies, and the horses they rode were also protected by rigid pieces of plate armor made of both of leather and steel. If the foot knights were considered living fortresses, when mounted they were nothing short of the tanks of this world!

They strengthened their bodies with magic arts, rushing towards the enemy, who they then trampled underneath their warhorses and pierced with their long lances.

“Kill them all! Show no mercy!”

“Don't escape! Those who turn their backs towards the dogs of Ortomea are cowards and traitors!”

“Damn it! My arm... My arm is...”

“Shut up! If you have the time and energy to yell and cry then just swing your sword and kill them!”

Savage voices could be heard from all across the battlefield.

This was the result of the imperial cavalry units storming towards the enemy comprised of foot soldiers.

They charged against the Zaldian army with great effect, not only wounding and killing many, but also destroying their formations.

However, the Zaldian knights weren't so incompetent that they'd let themselves be trampled for long.

“Everyone! Re-group! Spearmen, to the front! Immediately form a spearwall to stop and skewer the enemy's cavalry!”

“The rest, listen up! You don't have to fixate yourself with your platoons! Form up on the wings and close in on their cavalry once it's engaged. Form up immediately!”

The commanding officers were quick to perceive the situation and immediately issued the orders.

Rather than using cavalry against cavalry, they chose to get the infantry in formation and used that to face the enemy's cavalry charge.

The confused Zaldian knights immediately followed their commanding officers and reorganized their formations.

“Infantry! Attention, forward!”

Noticing that the enemy's army had regrouped and reorganized their formations, Saitou immediately pulled back his cavalry troop and in return ordered his foot soldiers to confront the enemy line.

Heavy cavalry units were very powerful, but they were not without flaws.

Although the average warhorse here was bigger than the Japanese horse, their strength and stamina still had a limit that needed to be taken into consideration.

The advantage of a cavalry unit was its weight and speed.

Conversely, if the horses were stalled in place, they would only become an easy target for the enemy.

Mixed units battle tactics were like playing janken(rock-paper-scissors).

No single unit variant stood supreme.

“Listen up! Send the invaders to oblivion! Push them back! Don't let them advance!”

The commander of the Zaldian army, after making sure that his army formation had become solid, raised his voice.

The Zaldian infantry stood in formation and began to move forward with uniform steps.

“Don't let those sissy knights from Zalda daunt you! We're the proud Imperial Knights of Ortomea! We shall crush our enemies and see them driven before us!”

Following their commanding officer's words, one after another, the knights from the empire plunged into the front lines.

At first, the armies from both sides stood in formation, but as soon as they collided with each other, their front ranks got distorted and collapsed.

Both forces were now comprised of foot knights only.

Their armours consisted of a complex series of garments, chain mail and thick iron plates. They used not only broadswords, but also two-handed swords, battle axes, maces and spears as weapons. Their bodies were also strengthened by way of using magic arts.

At the time, no big difference in fighting power between them could be discerned.

Both sides seemed equal in this battle, every time an enemy got killed, an ally soon

followed him to the underworld.

At this point, the battle had become one of attrition.

However, the difference in the commanders' abilities would decide the fate of the two forces.

Chapter 18

Eastern Invasion 2

Early 10th Month, the Year 2812, Western continent calendar.

Sardina's aim was to destroy the Kingdom of Zalda's main force.

If they managed to destroy the kingdom's Royal Knights, all that remained would have been the private soldiers owned by the regional nobility.

With that, the subjugation of the Kingdom of Zalda by the Ortomean Empire would advance drastically. Sardina had carried out several plans in order for them to occupy the entire kingdom as soon as possible..... Before the beast in the north awakened.



(Indeed..... I was careless that time... While predicting Mikoshiba's movements, I accidentally made a mistake during a critical moment... But in a sense, it was a good lesson. Whatever advantageous situation I create, there may always be a place where even a slight carelessness can become the cause of death...)

Sardina stared at the map spread across the desk inside the main tent. The face of a certain man appeared inside her mind.

A young man who seemed to be much wiser than someone his age ought to have been.

At first glance, he looked gentle, but hidden inside was the form of a ferocious beast.

The eyes of the man who Sardina and Saitou confronted in the past were cold and cruel, he was a man with strength like a fine steel sword.

A man who was capable of breaking free from the net she had wrapped around him, using only his strength, and escaped the empire's pursuit.

(If that person was the commander of the enemy force then...)

Such meaningless assumptions filled Sardina's mind.

She had thought about the plan again and again to ensure victory. However, the shadow of that man would stubbornly refuse to disappear from her mind.

“Your Highness... It is about time... Is it alright for me to issue the signal?”

Sardina who had drifted into the sea of thought was returned to reality after hearing her adjutant's words.

“S-Sure, Indeed... We should send the signal.”

So as to not let the people around her become aware of her anxiety, she ordered them in a calm manner.

(What am I doing?... If I go on like this, I will end up repeating the same mistake from back then... Right now, I should concentrate more on the current situation.)

The victor of this war had already been decided.

To achieve all this, she had been plotting various schemes and tricks. However, there was always the possibility that a little inattention or rashness would overturn the situation.

Even if she had won on this most crucial of battles, it did not mean that the war was over.

(I... Will not lose! Absolutely... Not lose.)

Sardina supposedly was part of the superior side, steadily progressing to this point by using a number of plans and strategies of her own design.

After this, all that was left was to issue the final push. In spite of this, her heart continued to beat intensely.





“Deputy General! The signal!” The gong resounded from the headquarters!

One of the adjutants who followed by his side raised their voice after hearing the sound of the gong.

Saitou silently listened. Although it was hard to distinguish it from the enemy’s shouting all around him, the sound of the gong managed to reach his ears.

“Indeed, there's no mistake... This is the signal pattern Her Highness Sardina described before. Everyone should know what to do, yes?”

“““Yes, sir! Ready to go!”“““

Having received their orders, Saitou's adjutants scattered to various places.

“Listen up! Just like this, we will withdraw to the back! Ring up the bell!”

Following Saitou's shout, the sound of bells informing of the retreat echoed throughout the battlefield.

“Retreat! It's a retreat!”

“Do not panic! Don't be confused! Withdraw while protecting each other!”

It was not easy for them to cooperate without knowing what was going on, since when in battle one does not have the power to completely act alone either.

Even though they lacked organisation, the soldiers began to withdraw one after another and retreated towards the rear-line headquarters.

While retreating, they kept paying attention to see if there was an ally who was in peril, and if so, the nearest knight would go help. There was no need for them to kill the enemy, they only had to fall back safely.

At the time of issuing the retreat command, the difference between the offensive side and the defensive side would become clearly visible.

Only one thing was important for the Ortomean knights, and that was to minimise their casualties.

While on the other hand, the Zaldian knights' priority was to increase their enemy's casualties.

For different purposes, the swords of both sides clashed against each other.



“General Belharres! Ortomean soldiers have begun to withdraw!”

When the voice of the messenger coming back from the front lines echoed in the tent, all the previous noises that were dominating inside the tent began to recede.

And by the time they understood what the messenger had to say, all the clamouring returned once again.

“What?! Is that true?”

Everyone inside the tent understood, that this war was one that could bring about the fall of their nation.

Comparing the national strength of the Ortomean Empire to their kingdom's, it was obvious that they were in for disadvantageous warfare from the start.

However, an unexpected opportunity had presented itself! The enemy showed signs of retreat. It was natural for the adjutants of the General to think that unless they wagered everything right now, they wouldn't have another chance for victory.

“Ortomea has drawn back their troops he said! If that is true, then, this is as good an opportunity as it gets for us! We should be pursuing them immediately!”

“Your Excellency! Please give us your order to pursue them! This is a testimony that God has not yet forsaken our Zalda!”

High spirited words sprung up one after another. While stroking his long white beard and nodding his head from listening to his adjutants' advice, the highest commanding officer of Zalda, General Belharres took his time to contemplate the situation.

While the adjutants around him proposed to advance enthusiastically, it was only himself who remained calm.

“Father... What should we do?”

A man asked General Belharres.

Unlike the other adjutants, his words seemed to indicate that he was more interested in hearing the General's opinion, rather than voicing his own.

The one who addressed the General was a man that looked like the 20 years younger version of him.

The adjutants then stopped their chatter and directed their sharp gazes towards the young man.

Despise, ridicule and stares filled with negative emotions overflowing from them.

Usually, when people were to find themselves under such gazes, they would shrink back, but this man seemed to be impudent enough in a bad way.

He did not flinch even though he was under such glaring from the adjutants.

“What do you think yourself? Joshua.”

The General asked his third son who sat down on the lowest seat.

“Fuh! Needless to say. If we're going to pursue... Then we should be prepared to get annihilated, should we intend to take Sardina's head.”

He then brought his finger close to the cigar that he held in his mouth and flung it away.

“““Eh?”””

In response to Joshua's words, the other adjutants unintentionally showed surprised expressions.

His words were that unexpected for them. However, compared to his adjutants and

their surprised faces, General Belharres simply nodded while displaying a satisfied smile.

Joshua then lit up another cigar and calmly smoked it, even though such an act was prohibited during a war council.

In fact, it was this very calm attitude he gave off, that made his utterance even more eerie.

“Fumu... So, if it was you, how would you make use of the situation? Would you withdraw here?”

Joshua replied to his father, General Belharres, with a shrug.

“If you want to survive, then we should withdraw...”

While saying those words, he turned his sharp gaze to his surroundings.

The absence of motivation that oozed out of his body until just now completely disappeared, suddenly he was releasing a mix of murderous intent and fighting spirit.

“If you guys want to preserve the Kingdom of Zalda... Then we have no choice but to obtain victory here.”

Gulp

The sound of someone gulping their saliva echoed inside the tent.

It was proof that the senior officers were intimidated by the young man sitting in front of them.

“Joshua-dono... I'm sorry for being rude, but what do you mean by those words?”

The eldest among the officers timidly asked Joshua.

For the senior officer, up until now, Joshua was merely a hindrance to them.

He was someone who had no respect for his elders, an alcoholic, stingy with money and a man with a bad reputation at the royal capital.

There were a lot of rumors that he had been visiting bars in the slums, gambling and brawling with people there.

So to speak, he was a human being that reeked of a criminal and a lowlife.

On this occasion, all of the people present here were aware that his father, General Belharres, had ordered him to join the army. However, the adjutants had thought that it was due to the General's parental love, wanting his third son who had a bad reputation to get some prestige.

That was why, for them, even after Joshua joined the army, they had never thought he would be giving his opinion. They only thought of him as human garbage.

“Don't you all understand? This is a trap... To pull our army further in and perform a pincer attack. Although they seemed worn-out, it is also evidence that they still have some ace up their sleeves... On the other hand, I would like to ask all of you, are you really planning on pursuing them just like this?”

In Joshua's eyes, the sentiment of contempt could be seen.

“It can't be... On what basis did you reach such a conclusion?”

“You're thinking too much!”

“General! He is only an amateur who does not understand warfare. Why should we miss this opportunity that might only appear once? Are you going to let it go as well?”

The adjutants turned their attention to General Belharres.

Among the adjutants, there were those who also considered Joshua's point of view regarding the possibility that all of this was according to Ortomea's plan.

The adjutants who had fought through many wars, would not be so foolish. Although they seemed to lose control due to the unexpected good fortune and proposed to pursue the enemy, their excitement from before had now died down.

However, they couldn't admit to it here.

No human being would suddenly follow someone who had a bad reputation and had been looked down upon by his peers all along.

They persisted in pursuing Ortomea not to win but to keep their pride.

“Everyone shut up for a bit... Joshua. You mentioned two options earlier, what did you mean by that? Why did you want us to decide between victory or defeat here despite knowing it was a trap?”

Hearing General Belharres' words, his adjutants grew silent.

If Joshua had thought it was a trap, then he should have told them to withdraw. In such a scenario, it is only common sense to return to one's base.

Even so, Joshua's remark allowed pursuit. Furthermore, he also added meaningful words such as 'if you want to preserve the Kingdom of Zalda...’

It was no wonder that his words attracted interest.

“Father... This, I do not have to tell you about it, no? You should already know the answer.”

“Say it. Explain it to everyone.”

Responding to such words, Joshua just shook his head as if giving up, and General Belharres kept sending his sharp gaze urging him to talk.

“Fuuh... Fine... The reason is simple. From a strategic point of view, this battle against Ortomea, has already been lost.”

Hearing Joshua's words, everyone who had calmed down previously, began to doubt their ears.

“Y-You bastard! Do you know what you're saying?!”

Breaking the silence, one of the adjutants raised a voice of anger.

He ran towards Joshua and grabbed him by the neck, completely ignoring the courtesy that was owed to the son of the General.

A bloody battle was still ongoing in the front. Everyone was desperately fighting to defend their land from the hands of the invaders, betting their lives for the sake of

peace for their motherland. For him to declare that they had already been defeated, it was nothing but an insult towards the knights that had to give up their lives so far.

In a sense, it was normal for him to even send his hand towards his sword hilt.

“Wait! What are you planning to do?! This is a war council you know?!”

A colleague who noticed that his hand was about to grab his sword immediately pressed him down.

Everyone there could understand the adjutant’s anger. However, they couldn’t also let him kill an ally at a war council.

Everyone turned silent. Because they knew, opening their mouths here would only invite the others’ jeers.

The only one who did not change his facial expression after hearing Joshua's words was General Belharres.

“Fumu... Although your words lack courtesy... I guess you're not wrong...”

It was a small mutter. However, the words of the General echoed within the tent that was filled by silence.

Just like a declaration of death.

Chapter 19

Eastern Invasion 3

Early 10th Month, the Year 2812, Western continent calendar.

Hearing what General Belharres said the expressions of everyone present turned pale. Who would have thought that their top commanding officer would admit defeat here?

"Y-Your Excellency..."

One of General Belharres' adjutants called to him with a trembling voice due to shock.

In this world, combat was fought mostly in close quarters, but no matter what world, the morale of the soldiers would always be a determining factor for the outcome of a battle.

And in order to keep that morale always high, trust towards the commander is more important than anything else.

Soldiers can bet their lives in war because they believe that their commander will win. Conversely, there are few humans who would stake their lives for a commander who they know cannot win.

And in this war, General Belharres was the highest ranking commanding officer of the Kingdom of Zalda's armed forces.

This meant that their victory or defeat depended on how he thought.

No matter how many soldiers had been lost, as long the commander did not admit defeat, the war would still go on. Even if they lost the battle, the war itself was still not lost as long the soldiers did not lose their fighting spirit.

On the other hand, if the soldiers were already losing their fighting spirit, no matter how many of them remained, the war was as good as lost already.

All this points to the fact that one of the most important qualities that any military

commander must have is an indomitable will and strength of mind.

One could compensate the ability to formulate strategies by appointing skilled subordinates. However, it is impossible to compensate for a commander that lacks mental fortitude.

In that sense, General Belharres should have been the best commander.

The Ortomean Empire, the Kingdom of Ernestgora. It was him who prevented those two countries from invading the eastern kingdoms for many years.

Together with the coalition of the eastern kingdoms, he has repeatedly helped to stop the ambitions of the great powers in the west many times.

For his adjutants, hearing an admission of defeat from such a general was akin to hearing words of despair. From their minds, Joshua's arrogant manner had already disappeared.

"Your Excellency... Isn't that a bit too much?! Many knights still believing that victory is still possible are fighting on the front lines, betting their lives... Yet, why does Your Excellency admit defeat so easily?!"

One of General Belharres' adjutants shouted in anger.

He showed a violent behavior that should have never been permitted to happen, but no one tried to stop him this time.

The reason for this was that all of them felt the same. General Belharres then raised his hand slowly to stop him, and turned his sharp gaze to the surroundings.

"Who said I accepted defeat in this war?"

He said those words with a calm voice.

Both confidence and the air of dignity from a warrior who had survived many battles could be felt from his voice.

There was no indication of fear in those words. Only firm resolution existed within them.

"Eh? But Your Excellency... Just now..."

"I never said we've lost the war. Joshua did not say that either."

None of the officers present could understand the meaning of what the General had just said.

The adjutants were sure that the General had said that they had already lost.

And they could not all be mistaken.

"What I meant by 'lost' is in term of strategy... Well, as long we've already been defeated strategy-wise, the way towards victory would be almost non-existent."

General Belharres deeply sighed. Then he showed a dark smile and continued talking.

"Ortomea has executed a multilayered strategy for this battle, limiting our movements... Is there anyone here who understands what this means?"

No one opened their mouth. Everyone keeps quiet and waits for him to continue.

It can't be helped that they could not understand the General's words.

It is unreasonable to ask knights who live on the battlefield about grand strategy.

<TLN: In our term, the topic is above their pay grade.>

General Belharres then starts talking so that the others could follow.

"In the first place, why did we choose an open field as the battlefield.?"

"That is because Ortomea only mobilized a small force which we thought that we had a chance of defeating by mobilizing the army under His Hajesty the King's direct command."

"Correct, now let me ask all of you, in the past, has our country have ever won against Ortomea by fighting alone?"

In the past, Zalda never fought against Ortomea alone. They always cooperated with the neighboring countries.

The adjutants start to realize what the General is talking about. Then, they all reach a

single conclusion.

""Ah!""

"It can't be... The Rozeria civil war is..."

General Belharres' adjutants turn a probing gaze at him.

"That is right... Of course, I have no proof. However, this invasion, the timing is too perfect for the Ortomea side... Perhaps they have prepared for this invasion for many years... Waiting for the chance when our allies won't be able to send reinforcement."

Territory, population, and economy. In all aspects, the kingdom of Zalda is inferior compared to the Ortomea Empire.

Still, the reason why the Zalda Kingdom has been able to maintain its independence is because of the existence of the alliance between the eastern kingdoms.

Rozeria, and Mist, whenever an emergency occurs, those two nations always sent their reinforcements. That is why, the kingdom of Zalda has survived this far.

Of course, they weren't helping out of the kindness of their hearts.

If the Zalda Kingdom were to be destroyed, that would mean the territory of a great country will spread into the eastern region of the western continent.

Which means, it would be almost a guarantee that their invasion would reach both, Rozeria and Mist.

"Due to the aftermath of the civil war, Rozeria could not afford to send reinforcement..... Physically, it is just impossible for them. And since Rozeria is currently in the middle of confusion, Mist kingdom could not dispatch soldiers through Rozeria land... It is also difficult to send reinforcement via sea route. It takes too much time to navigate through the southern direction, and via the north, there's wortenia peninsula... I don't know who created the plan, but being able to plunge Rozeria into civil war and contained both countries at the end... This person must be quite formidable."

All of his adjutants understood that in this war, it is hard to expect any reinforcement

from the two other nations.

Realizing that, the adjutants hold their breath. After having been explained this far, they finally understood, what kind of a dangerous situation they are in.

"If that the case... The thing that Joshua-dono called trap is..."

They might have realized that the words of the man they had hated contained some truth in them. They speak with a more friendly voice.

"Do you think the enemy who has prepared carefully this far would retreat that easily? I'm sure, they have troops lying in ambush... For the sake of choking the life of us..."

Toward Belharres' remark, the others are unable to say anything.

After hearing Ortomea's retreat, they all felt excited towards the unexpected event, but when they regained their calmness, they finally understood that this all was actually a trap.

"So that is why this battles victor has been decided, is it? Does that meant this war is also useless?"

Words filled with sadness and despair.

They will fight because they thought they will win. They can bet their life because they think they can protect those who are important to them. For those who believe that General Belharres would win, the words of Joshua and the General is just like a death god's breath.

The adjutant who tried to confirm it can only speak while feeling brokenhearted. However, General Belharres denied his statement.

"That is not it. The things we just talked about is what we see from the point of view of strategy, disadvantages, and advantages. Well, falling into despair is one of the causes of disadvantages, but there's still a way..."

""Is that true?!""

The weaker the human being, the easier they can be baited by the sweet temptation called hope.

The hope that appeared suddenly after being made aware of the despair that they cannot expect victory. Who would blame them for clinging to such hope?

But the road before them was much harsher than death.

"That is by taking their highest commander, Sardina Eizenheit's head..."

Following General Belharres words, the air inside the tent froze.

That plan is suicidal with a low chance of success.

Indeed, by killing the enemy's commander, victory could be attained.

Strategic defeat could be overturned by a tactical victory of taking Sardina's head.

Certainly, the theory is not wrong.

"...But, Your Excellency... That plan is too reckless..."

And elderly adjutant made up his mind and began to voice his concern.

Trying to aim for the enemy commander's head, while also plunging into the enemy's trap.

It is something easy to say, but will be a hard plan to execute as if trying to find a single needle inside a battlefield.

However, the adjutant can feel General Belharres determination, thus he fell in silence.

"I know... This can be said as trying to break the enemy's trap by force... That is why we must be prepared for annihilation here... But, even though it was small, there's the chance for us to save the country... If we retreat like this, Ortomea Empire army won't lose anything. They would even be able to make a base in Zalda with their current force... Given the national strength difference, with the enemy building a base inside our territory, we won't be able to gain it back..."

The natural defense where Zalda is being protected by many high mountains.

The rugged territory that prevents the invasion from the enemy.

If they let the enemy country make a base within Zalda territory, they won't be able to retake it again.

Indeed, the national strength of Ortomea Empire is higher. In fact, if their entire force were to come attacking, Zalda won't be able to defend itself.

It is common in a strategic teaching that when besieging a fort, the attacking side needs three times more force than the defending side.

But from the start, Ortomea is already stronger.

"Besides, tacticians easily to lose their head over something. Up to this point, it is developing according to the strategy of the enemy's strategist. This strategist should have been confident that the victory is in their hands. Usually, when strategist is in such state, they would be careless..."

No other option is present.

The only thing remaining is the harsh hope.

"Your Excellency... Is your decision final?"

"Yes, I'm sorry, all of you have to go down with me like this..."

General Belharres' words are ruthless.

Because he gives out a plan with little possibility of success with also little possibility of returning alive. However, no one present shows an indication of fear.

At the beginning, the hearts of the adjutants were filled with despair. It was natural, normally, no one is willing to bet their lives when defeat is already expected.

But General Belharres manages to capitalize on that.

Because nothing is stronger and more terrifying than a human being who prepared to die. <TLN: Death soldiers, Sun Tzu art of war, always avoid fighting enemy soldiers who are on death ground because it will give them the desperate edge that makes men fight like they never had before... >

"Very well... With this, we shall pursue the enemy commander's head with the entire force left. There will be no retreat! Do you all understand?!"

""""Yes, sir!""""

From within their bodies, fighting spirit starts to burn like never before. Knowing their predicament and to not die pointlessly, the will of men prepared to give up life for their country.

Zalda against Ortomea. The battle between the two countries has reached the final phase.

Chapter 20

Eastern Invasion 4

Early month, 10th month, the year 2812, western continent calendar.

“““Charge!”“““

Cavalry Knights holding spears charged towards the Ortomea army's line.

And the foot soldiers followed behind them while brandishing their spears.

“What are you doing?! Ready your spears! Surround them and kill them! Don't let go of your weapon!”

Ortomea's commander shouted the order.

He gives instructions to his confused subordinates who were frightened by the enemy's cavalry assault. Due to his shout, the restless knights begin to calm down.

The frontline commanders immediately follow the order and repeat the order to their squad.

“Surround them! Don't be frightened!”

The commanders who realize their subordinates being frightened reprimanded them.

After that, the Ortomea soldiers begin to direct their spears toward the charging cavalry.

“The real value of cavalry is their mobility and rushing force! That's why, if we manage to stop their movement, we can finish them!”

One of the Ortomea commanding officer who ordered the soldiers to surround Zalda cavalry knights smiled.

Although the attack strength and maneuverability of a cavalry is excellent, their defense and endurance are low.

Even if their body is hardened with metal armors. No matter how strong their horses are, a living thing has its limitation. - Not to mention, it is not wise to plunge into the enemy line and fight on the spot without trying to withdraw.

<TLN: This is the case for cavalry, after you charge and hit the enemy line, you should immediately withdraw, let the foot soldiers handle the rest because if the cavalry lost its momentum, they will die.>

In fact, the moment one of the Zalda Kingdom cavalry stop and swung their spear, they will fall from their horse and die.

With cavalry unit, the moment they cannot withdraw, they can only swing their spears.

And the cost for such reckless charge is big. Because the foot soldiers who followed them from behind would end up getting pressured as well.

And they end up with only half survived.

“Good! Just like this, crush them all! If we succeed here, we will get a lot of war merits!”

Ortomea commanding officer smiled showing his greed and desire.

Knights who can ride horses usually have a high position. Taking the lives of such Knights greatly affect one's war merits.

That is why the commanding officer faces greatly relaxed. However, his expectation was being crushed by the reality that happens.

“Unit commander! There's another wave!”

“W-What?!”

The mind of the unit commanding officer who heard of the report of his subordinates froze.

It was because the report was too unexpected.

“What should we do?! If we stay like this we will end up being sandwiched instead!”

Even without being told by his subordinate, the commanding officer understood how dangerous the situation is.

To deal with the enemy's other unit, he has to draw back his troops and regroup.

However, once he does that, he will give another chance to the Zalda Knights whom he has painstakingly surrounded.

(It can't be helped... I can only divide the troops.)

In case one is being sandwiched, there is only a few way to deal with it. His judgment is not wrong. But, to perform this measure, there's no time for his unit to break up.

At the time he was preoccupied with his subordinate report and thinking about countermeasures, he committed an irreparable mistake.

Something cold entered his belly.

The surrounding noise disappeared from his ears. And a sense of something warm slides down on his skins.

There's no pain. However, a feeling of heavy fatigue assaulted his body.

“You bastard...”

A spear is being pushed into his stomach from the side.

His eyes finally manage to focus on, what he saw is a body of the Zalda Kingdom knight dyed with blood from his subordinates attack.



Approximately 1000 new troops attacked Ortomea's frontline soldiers.

They joined up with the troops that rushed earlier than them...

Contrary to the Ortomea side expectation, the enemy charges into the battle formation once again.

Surpassing Saitou's expectation, where he thought that the enemy's new unit that

appeared has come to rescue the unit that is being surrounded.

“Khu! Why, why they are not withdrawing? What are you people intend to do?! Are they planning on giving up their lives?!”

The Zalda Kingdom's central Knights are pushing the line forward one step at a time.

They repeated their reckless charges again and again as if they are losing their mind. No matter how much Ortomea knights kill them, they seem not wavering.

Normally, after an army executes an assault they would immediately withdraw from the front line, and rebuild their formation.

Of course, that was the case when the enemy is not blocking the path, but it is impossible to not choose to withdraw. Especially when you took command of a cavalry unit.

Of course, in a war what matter is winning. As long you win the war, the method is not important.

However, in Saitou's eyes, the Zalda Kingdom's attack looks like a desperate attack. In his eyes, the Zalda kingdom commander seems to have abandoned the winning possibility and appears to have chosen to kill the Ortomea soldiers as much as possible.

“What's going on? Why their advance speed did not falter? If we let them proceed like this, her highness plan would get ruined!”

Saitou bitterly scowled at the scene.

His duty is to lure the Zalda Kingdom soldiers until the place where the Ortomea soldiers are laying in ambush.

This mission where he lured the Zalda Kingdom army while moderately engage them and preserve his allied soldiers as much as possible is crucial.

Fighting the enemy while making it as natural as possible, he also needs to draw back the troops without letting them getting sucked into a confused fight.

Despite that, Saitou and the Zalda army were fighting a rough battle that could be

called a quagmire.

The Ortomea army who wants to withdraw. And the Zalda army who does not want to let them go.

The problem is, the Zalda army does not seem to rush at all.

Although the Zalda army formed a horizontal formation, the one who performs pushing is only the center part.

It felt like the unit deployed on the sides are only wanting to nail the Ortomea army in place rather than trying to advance.

“Vice-leader! Both right and left wings are hopeless! Far from reinforcing the central part, their wing seems to stay stand still! Those Zalda bunch, they are not advancing at all, but when we tried to lure them, they persistently keep us fighting. They completely stopped our movement!”

It was someone from the Night Demon chivalric order who ran desperately to report to Saitou.

“Cih, what are they aiming at...”

From Saitou's point of view, the situation has turned into something unnatural.

The central force of Zalda Kingdom is rushing while abandoning their lives.

The left and right wings of Zalda troops that appeared after them harassing Ortomea army making Ortomea army unable to withdraw.

Due to Ortomea using crane wing formation to surround the enemy at the beginning, the Zalda Kingdom army formation begin to change from a horizontal formation into a fish scale formation.

(It can't be... This guy...)

A single hypothesis appeared inside Saitou's mind.

(It can't be, are these guys aiming at her highness head?)

Saitou who came up with such conclusion shuddered.

He began to realize Zalda kingdom strong fighting spirit.

(Are they insane? To aim her highness head like this... Certainly, if they manage to take her highness Sardina's head then they would win this war... However, the possibility of that to happen is even lower than 5%. Besides, whether or not they manage to do it, their army will without a doubt suffering a devastating loss! But why are they still willing to bet on it like this?! No, the reason is not important right now... First, we need to rebuild our front line...)

Saitou's immediately shakes off the doubt in his mind and start thinking for counter-measures.

Either way, the Zalda kingdom central troops has descended into madness, and due to the suicidal attack by them, the horizontal formation had changed into the shape of a fish scale formation.

If he does not rebuild the formation it would be dangerous for Sardina, because of the possibility that the enemy might penetrate the central formation. -

After thinking about it for a second, Saitou immediately made a quick decision.

“Messenger! Change of plan, at this place, we will fight the Zalda Kingdom's army. Tell the situation to her highness Sardina immediately! Listen! inform her that the Zalda kingdom army might aim at her head!”

The place where the north and south detached units will perform their ambush is still 3km away toward the west

That place has small hills from three directions, north, west, and south, a perfect place to perform an ambush.

And it is Saitou's job to lure the Zalda army there, and if he manages to do that, his ally would be able to decimate the entire Zalda army.

However, Saitou has given up on luring the enemy toward that place.

He was being cornered by the desperate enemy's soldiers and driven to a situation where he might be defeated if he keeps trying on retreating.

Furthermore, if the enemy manages to break through the battlefield here, there's a chance that Sardina would meet with danger.

Of course, there are still troops guarding her but, there's still the chance the enemy manage to break through that as well.

If that is the case then, only one choice remaining.

He has to stop retreating and prevent Zalda's offensive right here.

(If we manage to report to her highness Sardina in time, her highness will surely turn the detached forces toward this place, and attack the Zalda kingdom from the rear... Only the point of ambush change... However, the damage to our troops would be high, damn it that persistent bastard!)

For Ortomea side, even if they win, it is not enough.

They also need to reduce the casualties as much as possible.

If they failed to do that, Ortomea Empire would not be able to advance.

Saitou who understand that curses the Zalda Kingdom commander for doing what he did right now.

“Immediately inform the reserve unit! Hold the Zalda army in this place at all cost! Don't let them break through! I'm sure, Her Highness will immediately send the reinforcement! Until then, do not let them break through!”

Saitou loudly gives his order, abandoning his calm atmosphere.

This shows the urgency of the situation. And his subordinates who understood that immediately filled with tension.

“Absolutely stop them here!”

“““Yes, Sir!”“““

After being given the order, all of them immediately scattered all the way toward their place.

The Zalda Kingdom against Ortomea Empire. The battle of both armies begins to turn into a total war.

Chapter 21

Eastern Invasion 5

Early month, 10th month, Western Continent Calendar.

“They got us good eh... As expected General Berharres I guess? Immediately send the message to the detached forces. One hour... Tell Saitou to halt them only for one hour!”

After hearing the message from Saitou, Sardina clicked her tongue while looking at the map spread in front of her, then she gives out the order to the messenger.

Sardina who heard the information brought by the messenger instantly realize Belharres intention.

(Just like Saitou said, he's aiming at my neck... No, probably not just that... The things that General Belharres aim is...)

“Yes! Immediately...”

Being overwhelmed by her angry look, the messenger immediately runs out the tent to execute her order.

“Someone, is there someone! Get me another messenger! Tell the other messenger to head toward the detached forces and tell them to reinforce Saitou as soon as possible!”

“Be relieved, your highness. I've already ordered some messenger to do just that...”

Following Sardina's high voice, a calm voice echoed inside the tent.

She did not realize when he has come. The moment Sardina directed her eyes toward the entrance of the tent, Sudou calm face entered her vision.

Sudou, the matter regarding Rozeria seems to have settled down, thus he was being tasked to lead the escort unit and participating in this battle.

Sudou who is good at maneuvering behind the scene is also good at leading the army.

Sudou and Saitou.

By putting two of these capable Japanese in her army shows how much Sardina stakes her everything in this invasion.

“Sudou... Right... Thank you.”

“No no, for your Highness, this Sudou will do anything.”

Saying that Sudou shrugged his shoulders while looking like usual.

This man expression never changes no matter what the situations are making him hard to understand.

“Fuuh... You seem to have a lot of free hands eh? Sudou.”

She understood what he said was just a superficial, but Sardina replied to him with sarcasm while looking relaxed.

The more one understands the situation, the more anxiety and frustration will be born within one's heart. -

“Even if I got impatient, the situation won't change after all... Well, I can at least say, I understand the feeling of Your Highness for being impatient.”

Even after Sardina told him a sarcasm, Sudou's expression did not change.

On the contrary, his tone of voice has become calmer.

“Well, it seems Zalda Kingdom's army is not that stupid... Their commander is General Belharres after all. As expected from a man with a long history of military service huh? I don't think they have the blessing of their king and the ministers, but to execute this kind of plan at the end... This is really something...”

“Is that how you going to tell me that they might be able to take my head?”

Listening to Sudou's words, Sardina asked him.

Hearing her question, Sudou smiled.

“Please don't joke... I just praising their strategy. After all, General Belharres never honestly thought that they will manage to take your highness head.”

After hearing Sudou's answer, Sardina was convinced that her intuition was right.

“As expected... That was their aim huh?”

“Indeed... Their aim is to make this battle turn into a draw. I think they want to exhaust both war power. Considering the difference in national power between our nation and the Zalda Kingdom that is something they should never do. And yet, they still choose to do that which means.....”

“A third country... They are planning to drag Ernestgora into this war.”

“I fear that it's likely to happen...”

Sudou nodded his head after hearing Sardina's words.

There's no smile appear on his face like he usually did.

His gaze turns into a sharp gaze, looking far beyond the battlefield. It is such an overwhelming sense of intimidation, that only someone who has survived many battlefields usually has.

“They realize that they cannot win against us in strategy, thus they choose a desperate measure... Geez, what an absurd people...”

“Perhaps this is an arbitrary decision made by General Belharres. Since I don't think that Zalda's King and his ministers would approve such a plan.”

Toward Sudou's opinion, Sardina nodded in agreement.

“No king would grant such permission after all... to pull in Ernestgora into one own country and engage the war...”

Sardina bitterly spoke.

“I guess it will depend on how much we can suppress the casualties from this battle...”

If we were down to less than half then..."

"I know... It would be hard for domestic control if we lost more than half of our current force. If that happens..."

"Ernestgora in the north won't stay silent... They will also invade Zalda and aim for the coastal territory, or endorse take over the entire territory... For those guys, as long they can reduce our power even for a bit, they would be happy to do it after all."

To occupy the Zalda Kingdom itself was relatively easy, given the difference in national power.

Even if the Rozeria Kingdom and the Mist Kingdom came for reinforcement, it is still possible to obtain a sufficient victory.

However, it took too much time to devise the strategy, directing the strategy while also being conscious of the shadows of the other two major powers.

Kirtantia in the west aside, Ernestgora in the north have a border with the Zalda Kingdom.

If Ortomea Empire took too much time to occupy the Zalda Kingdom, then it was clear that Ernestgora would obstruct Ortomea territory expansion.

"What do you think that female fox of Ernestgora would do?"

"Let's see... That person is someone who likes to take control of everything without dirtying her own hand after all..."

Listening to Sardina's words, the young queen of Ernestgora figure appears inside Sudou's mind.

Her appearance is normal. Compared to Roezeria Lupis or Princess Sardina, they are similar put at the same time completely different.

It is wasteful time to compare them.

However, contrary to her appearance, her personality is horrible.

She is ruthless and cold-hearted ruler, born to rule, she even not hesitate to obliterate her family member.

Sudou had only met her twice, but the intense impression was imprinted on his mind.

A queen with superior intelligence who earned herself the nickname of the female fox. She's someone who will never miss a great opportunity.

"First, she would, without doubt, move her soldiers into Zalda's territory... Since she won't let us be the only one who increases the territory."

"In the process, Ernestgora and us will definitely collide. Will Zalda have room for negotiation in such situation?... Honestly, how stubborn of them..."

"Weak country is a weak country, they just desperate to survive."

Hearing Sardina frustrated words, Sudou quietly shook his head.

"Well, whatever. Anyhow, we need to win this battle first. Because this will decide our next move."

The problem now is to win against Zalda army. After they win, that would be the time to decide what the next move.

"Indeed, although the possibility is very low, there's still the possibility that our army gets overwhelmed by their fighting spirit, and get defeated instead..."

The biggest concern for them right now is this battle. Whether or not the Zalda kingdom manages to break through the front line.

"I as well... I will head to the front!"

Sardina said those words while looking tense and stared at Sudou.

It can be said as a foolish decision. Because she was planning to bring out the enemy's target before their own eyes.

However, Sudou did not deny her decision.

Because he felt the strong will to fight after looking at her eyes. Furthermore, there's also an advantage in her plan.

“I see... To wager everything huh?”

“If I proceed to the frontline, the 2000 escort troops can also be turned into a war potential, and if I go to the front line, won't the morale of the soldiers would raise as well?”

The reason why Ortomea is in a stalemate against Zalda is that they only bring the same amount of soldiers.

Zalda Knights morale is high because they are not afraid of dying.

To be exact they are in a state of ecstasy.

They are swallowed by the sense of crisis and patriotism to protect their homeland.

“If your highness heads toward the front line, the morale would definitely raise... And we can also turn the escort troops into war potential, increasing the possibility that we can hold them until the detached forces arrive, but...”

Sudou stopped his words.

Thinking about it, the probability of winning is there.

With their highest commanding officer present, the Ortomea's soldiers morale would raise.

However, when he thinks about being her adjutant, Sardina proposal is too dangerous.

Between the safety and risk...

He can't really choose.

Since even if he was absolutely sure of winning, there's still the possibility of losing too.

“I will be absolutely careful of the danger...”

Hearing those words from Sardina, Sudou make his decision.

He thought that thinking too much like this won't make any difference, and having the thought of losing making him feels like a fool.

What he needs to do is to believe in his highest commanding officer, Sardina.

“I understand. We will immediately move the escort troops to the front line...”

Sudou answered with those words and slowly lowered his head toward Sardina.

It was him paying his respect to his commanding officer decision. -



On that day, the battle between the Zalda Kingdom and Ortomea Empire was won by Ortomea Empire.

However, in Ortomea eyes, it was not a perfect victory.

It is true that Ortomea manages to obtain victory after taking the head of Zalda's highest commanding officer, General Belhares...

But Sardina expectation was right.

Zalda lost 16,000 of its soldiers, while Ortomea lost 17,000 soldiers.

Due to the nearly equal number of damage, Ortomea has no other choice but to temporarily stop their invasion.

Sardina who has control over the nobles near the border tried to recover their strength.

However, she could not immediately resume the invasion.

Just like what she had predicted, Ernestgora crosses Zalda border, and begin to bared its fangs.

At this place, a three-way war between Zalda, Ortomea, and Ernestgora will begin.

And with the disturbance within the Zalda Kingdom escalate, Mikoshiba Ryouma able to get the time he needed.

The time required for themselves to survive...

Chapter 22

Wortenia Peninsula 1

Day 15th, 1st month, the year 2813, Western Continent Calendar.

Gushu

A sound something being crushed resounded inside a forest.

Grassy-smell that came out from the trees mixed with the rusty smell of blood entered Sara's nose.

“Ryouma-sama... How are you feeling? Is there anything uncomfortable about your body?”

While saying that, Sara handed the towel toward the person standing in front of her eyes.

“Oh... There's no problem... This is a great thing, a combat magic art that is... I felt like my body have turned into a fierce beast.”

“Ryouma-sama have mastered the basic. Afterward, it is only a matter of practical experience.”

“Acquiring experience huh... With this alone, I already able to kill a fierce monster with just bare hands. I wonder how far can I go if I train myself with this...”

Saying that Ryouma lifted his lips and smiled. The figure he was now is exactly like a smile of a demon.

With blood from the monster smeared on his face.

Both arms dyed with blood up until the elbows, and from his fingers, bloods dripped down to the ground.

Near his feet, ferocious wolves were laying dead.

Five of them in total.

The wolf body length was around 1,5 m with the weight of its body around 50kg.

The wolves that was supposedly being categorized as one of the strong monsters inside the forest, now were laying dead near Ryouma's feet.

It was the appearance of a loser in a battle for survival.

From the wolves body with its head being crushed blood keep coming out soaking the ground.

“To be honest, I never thought that it would be this easy, to the point I can actually kill them with bare hands. Not only my strength increased. But my sense and body have also become sharp.”

Saying those words filled with his overwhelmed feeling, Ryouma shift his gaze toward the wolves dead bodies.

Other than the exhilaration rising from the depth of his body, the things that appear in front of him felt like an illusion.

A human muscle strength is significantly inferior to that of animals.

Even if you were armed with guns and knives, you can't say that you can absolutely win.

That is how much difference between humans and animals.

And yet, now he could kill animals with just his body alone. Not only that, he was taking the enemies at the same time.

And after wiping his body with the towel. Ryouma could not find any injury either.

It is a proof that Ryouma is using the strength that is higher than the ferocious animal's strength.

The warm temperature he felt when he pierces the wolf's belly with his hand.

The feeling when he ripped the wolf's head by holding its upper and lower mouth.

Besides that, the one that Ryouma had killed is not just your ordinary animal. It is a ferocious creature categorized as monsters.

A sense of accomplishment for being able to do what he could not do previously begin

to swell up.

Ryouma could feel such sensation dominated his body.

“Of course not everyone could do it. This is possible because Ryouma-sama already has a trained body. And also had an actual fighting experience.”

Just like Sara had said, it was thanks to Ryouma's body that had been trained by his grandfather.

Moreover, he had experienced actual fights that he cannot get at his original world.

With various factors and together with the new power he gained called magic art, this is the result of such synergy.

“Even the children who learn the same combat magic art, currently, they have a hard fight...”

Saying those words, Sara directed her gaze toward the depth of the forest.

Although she speaks ambiguously, it is rare for her to direct words that indicate criticism toward Ryouma like this.

“A hard fight huh... Is Sara dissatisfied?”

Ryouma frowned toward Sara while asking the question.

He can also felt the dissatisfaction from her tone of voice.

Of course, Ryouma is not stupid enough to think that his choice as absolutely correct.

However, this selection process is absolutely necessary even if it was something not right.

There's no other choice even if Sara told him she dissatisfied with it.

Since right now, Ryouma has no room to save the weak.

Sara looks directly at Ryouma's unshakable eyes, and unexpectedly she diverts her line of sight.

She herself also understands.

But even if she understands it with her head, her heart could not really swallow it.

“Of course, I understand the reason why Ryouma-sama brought them here...”

Her elder sister Laura does not feel about it too much, but Sara seems to have a strong trauma toward slave life.

The vulgar look filled with desire that the slave traders directed to her.

Anxiety thinking about the moment when she is going to be sold. And also despair for being treated as domestic animals.

Every time she saw the children training, such feeling spring up from the back of her heart.

Nevertheless, she understood that there's no other choice, she also have no intention to fully criticize Ryouma who ordered her to teach the children how to fight, and beyond that, she also felt benevolent from his intention.

In this world, it is a survival of the fittest.

In this world, the right to live can only be obtained by one own's power. and there's no consideration toward the weak.

But, if you do not mind being oppressed by the others with powers, then you can stay as the weak.

Getting robbed, violated, and killed. If you were prepared those kinds of things to happen to yourself or the people you want to protect, then you can stay as the weak.

Being robbed by thieves, or having your loved one violated by unreasonable nobles, or having you being killed by monsters and become their food, if you prepared to experience all that then you can stay as the weak without learning how to fight.

But if you want to live with the rights and pride as a person.

If you want to protect those important to you, then there's only one option.

And that option is to become strong.

You can be strong financially. you can be strong violently. Or you can also use wisdom. All of that can become power.

The power itself is justice.

For some people who understand that, Ryouma's method can be said as something gentle.

He taught the slave children reading, writing, and also give them the power to fight.

That is the same as giving a hope to the weak.

Even if such choice comes from Ryouma, the act itself is not something to be condemned.

In truth, the children are fortunate. They were given the opportunity to change from the weak and become strong.

Now, while they wander around the boundary of life and death, they were about to change from their weak self, and be reborn as the strong.

They will become the strong by surviving in this forest, where strong monsters wander around.

Sara turned her gaze to the depth of the dark forest once again.

Then she quietly prays for the safety of the children.

It is the only thing she can do for the children, hoping as many children as possible survive this trials.



“Melissa! What are you doing! If you idly around like that you're going to die! Ready your sword properly! The enemy is going to attack again!”

Melissa was unable to react immediately after hearing the boy voice.

In her eyes, the figure of a black beast bearing its fangs is being reflected.

That is the figure of a black fur tiger.

From its mouth, two sharp curved fangs protruding out trying to tear Melissa's body.

The tiger runs like a win and attack Melissa with its 3m huge body.

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!”

Melissa screamed out of fear.

Although she was able to hold her sword properly.

But her body won't move because of fear.

Light flashes on the tiger eyes. With its two sharp fangs. And its huge body, far bigger compared to Melissa's body.

Such fact binds Melissa's mind and with no combat experience her body ends up frozen in place.

“Are you idiot! Clan! Take Melissa to the rear! Coil! you and I will engage the tiger!”

After pushing Melissa aside, the boy set his sword, ready for battle.

The boy releases his murderous intent.

But such murderous intent from him is not a threat to the tiger.

However, the tiger seems to change its evaluation which previously only looking at him as a food.

The tiger stopped its feet, and turn toward the tiger, creating some distance between them.

“Melissa! Get back, now!”

The boy called Clan grabs Melissa body and drag her toward the rear.

“Eh?! Wait! It's hurt! Wait a bit...”

Melissa who was being dragged with full force unintentionally protest.

The boy who confronts the tiger reacted to that voice.

The moment the boy reacted, the tiger strike the boy like an arrow being released from the bow.

“Damn it!”

The next instant, the boy clenched his sword and thrust it into the tiger that jumped toward him.

And the moment the huge tiger pushes down the boy, the boy called Coil pierced the tiger belly from the side.

The moment when the tiger attacked the boy, he had unintentionally pushed his sword forward.

That was just his instinctive act trying to protect himself, but it seems like the goddess of fate didn't want him to die yet.

His sword stabbed directly into the tiger's opened mouth.

However, because of the overwhelming weight of the tiger, he was being pushed under the tiger body.

“Are you alright?! Kevin!”

Coil shouted out the name of the boy who was being pushed down by the tiger.

The tiger had already died but Coil cannot afford to be happy yet.

In his heart, Coil was worried about Kevin's safety.

“Clan, Help! Help me move the tiger! Melissa watch the surrounding! Listen, there's the possibility of another monster come and attack us. Don't miss any movement from beyond the forest!”

Just because they killed the enemy in front of their eyes, it does not mean everything is over.

Monsters are wondering inside the forest.

And some of them might be attracted toward the blood of the tiger they had killed.

“Y-Yes...”

Melissa replied weakly while nodding her head.

Coil and Clan then begin to deal with the tiger dead body.

“Damn it! It's soo heavy... Clan! Put more power!”

“I know!”

The two boys tried to lift the 300kg dead tiger body.

“Kevin! Kevin! Now... Crawl out!”

Clan calls out toward Kevin the moment there's a gap between the tiger body and Kevin body.

Even though they use physical strengthening magic art, they are physically still at the age of 13 to 15 years old.

Due to the fact that they had lived a tough life as slaves, their original physical strength is kind of low.

It could be said that the reason why they managed to lift the tiger body is thanks to the four months they had been trained.

“Fuck! This is bad, Clan! Kevin might have been unconscious!”

Coil said those words after seeing Kevin did not move out from under the tiger body.

“Melissa! Help Kevin! Hurry!”

“Eh?! Wait...”

“Hurry up Melissa! Clan and I can't hold this huge body much longer!”

A boy raises his voice in anger toward the hesitated Melissa.

“What are you waiting for! Are you trying to kill Kevin or what! Hurry up!”

The boys cannot hide their irritation toward Melissa who did not move.

The four of them have been sharing their happiness and sorrow for the past four months.

Their bond is strong.

They do not think differently even toward Melissa. In their mind right now they are only worried about Kevin's safety. -

“I-I'm alright... Can you lift it up already... It's heavy...”

“Kevin!”

Hearing the voice from under the tiger body, Coil shout out Kevin's name.

Before long, Kevin crawl out from under the tiger's body.

“Are you alright, Kevin?”

“Yeah, I'm fine, my shoulder got injured a little...”

Kevin answered Coil's question while holding his left shoulder.

His left arm hung down listlessly.

Due to the overwhelming tiger weight, his shoulder might be dislocated and worst case scenario would be the bone is broken.

Well, for him survived after getting attacked by such a huge tiger can be said to be lucky, after all, if their number getting reduced their overall chance of surviving inside the forest also will be reduced.

“Melisa, we will take over watching the surrounding. You take a look at Kevin's shoulder.”

After Clan said those words, he grabs his sword and turns his eyes toward the surrounding.

His behavior befitting of a soldier is the result of his training after four months.

Although he was worry about his friends, he cannot afford to neglect watching the surrounding.

Coil also nodded his head and take the opposite direction to watch over the surrounding.

Melissa who was stand petrified all this time immediately took out the medic supply from her bag and check Kevin's injury.

After checking Kevin's injury, it seems like he was lucky that his shoulder is only dislocated.

After performing the first aid taught by the mercenaries and let him drink the medicine, he should be able to move his shoulder like usual after a few days.

With this, their overall battle potential drop is minimized.

However, Melissa heart still cannot recover.

She thought that it was because of her failure that Kevin got hurt.

“I'm sorry, Kevin...”

While rolling the bandage around Kevin's shoulder, Melissa said her words of apology.

When she saw the tiger, she was unable to move due to fear.

And she was also unable to help Kevin out from under the tiger body.

Melissa was apologizing for all of that.

However, on the contrary, after hearing her words, Kevin frowned his eyebrows.

“Are you stupid? Why are you apologizing? Aren't we comrades?”

He bluntly said those words to her.

But, one can also felt the deep affection from his words. <TLN: Alright the word affection is as friends/comrades etc... The author did not use any indication that Kevin love her as a girl.>

“B-But...”

“Didn't I said already? We're a team. Living together, Die together... Am I right?”

Kevin strokes Melissa's head with a smile on his face.

This act of kindness is backed by absolute trust and affection.

Chapter 23

Wortenia Peninsula 2

Day 25th, 2th Months, the Year 2813, Western Continent Calendar.

“Depart!”

A woman with red hair shouted out loudly while straddling her horse at the front of the army. And she raised her spear high.

Following her voice, a group of about 300 people goes through the north gate of Epiroz city and headed toward the Wortenia Peninsula.

It was a very solemn and magnificent sight.

Merchants and commoners who walked through by the streets would stopped their feet silently as they watched the army to passed by.

No one opened their mouth.

Rather than wanted to cheer, they felt like being pressured by such sight.

出発!

その声に従い、一団が
城塞都市イピロスの北門を抜け、
一路ウォルテニア半島へ歩み始める。
百や二百ではきかない人数が、
無言のまま街道を進む。



The equipment of the army is very special, which give a huge impression to the people who saw them.

All black...

Under their leather armors, neither shirts nor shoes, even their swords sheaths and spears handle are pitch black.

Even the harness metal was also painted black.

Only their horse color not all black, nevertheless the sight was very unusual.

And the flag they had carried also made people unable to avert their eyes away.

A sword on a black background. And two golden snakes coiled itself around the sword.

The snakes' eyes were sewn red, giving an intimidating aura toward the surrounding.

If it was used separately then it won't be unusual.

However, they had used all of that element as a single coat of arms.

For all that, the figure of those people was able to bind the heart of the people who watched them.

It was as if they are people of darkness that just came out from the depths of the abyss, that was the impression the people got from such scene. -

“I see, so she is one of that man close associates huh? If I'm not wrong, her name is Lione. I heard she have a career as a mercenary... I see now. She's a good woman... That is what I wanted to say, but... Indeed, this looks magnificent.”

From one of the Epiroz city's watchtower, an old man with grey hair muttered those words.

He was an old man with a mild expression.

And it was also obvious that he's a wealthy man.

On his fingers are jeweled rings, he also wore silk clothes. And the most concrete evidence was his big belly.

“Father-in-law is such worrywart, just like Yuria... I don't think we should be worried

about them too much though?"

Earl Salzberg who was looking the same scene as the elderly man said those words with a somewhat amazed voice.

In fact, he was already fed up with the old man reaction.

Even his wife Yuria, urged him to be cautious toward the man named Mikoshiba Ryouma.

It was also Yuria suggestion to hire some mercenaries and tasked them to infiltrate.

The Earl thought by doing that it was overdoing it since he could just be killed by using the army, but his wife Yuria never stop telling him to be cautious.

She was very careful as if she feared that the Earl would fought against Mikoshiba Ryouma.

However, from the point of view of the Earl, Ryouma's power was just like an ant. After all, they don't have even a base.

The Earl never regarded his wife's ability lightly, but he never understood why he had to be very careful around Ryouma.

Such question begun to created some complaints in his mind, and gradually dissatisfaction begun to fill the Earl's heart.

"Do you think so? Look at that, at first, those soldiers were mere slaves. And yet, they are able to perform such organized movement, you know? Only a few month had passed since Baron Mikoshiba buy those slaves and started to educate them. Being able to achieve this with just such a short amount of time... Earl Salzberg, to be honest, I felt fear after seeing this scene..."

The old man had a very strong confidence in his judgment.

With his ability to judge he was able to bring the Mistel firm which does not have big influence at the beginning to became the chairman of the business alliance.

Such fact gives him a very strong self-confidence.

And from the perspective of such man, the group who left via the north gate looked like a threat.

“How foolish... Certainly, the weapon they had bought from father-in-law are good ones, but their soldiers are only mere mercenaries and a bunch of slaves. I'm sure those black clothes which made them looked strong was only a bluff. Well, from the eyes of a father-in-law who had never seen battlefield, such shows might be impressive...”

After saying those words, Earl Salzberg turned his gaze toward the old man.

The old man is the father of his wife.

However, the Earl always looking down at the old man standing in front of him.

Although there's the part where he still uses honorific to call the old man.

Of course, the old man in front of the Earl could claim his privilege as a father-in-law, but even if he did that, the Earl would disregard it lightly... That's why it was weird for the old man to be that reserved toward his own son-in-law.

Besides, for Earl Salzberg, Ryouma's army was not worth much consideration.

Their numbers are only around 300 people.

On top of that, it was organized by mixed mercenaries and slaves together, if another noble were to hear it, they would without a doubt giving the same opinion.

The only thing the Earl thought to be worth consideration was the all black clothes.

But even with such appearance, in his eyes, it did not mean they are a strong army.

That's why the Earl cannot help it but directed his criticism toward the old man who cannot saw through such bluff. -

“You might say that... But do you think men without leadership would be able to move like that?”

Certainly, there was no disorder.

Of course, it was also true that their numbers are only around 300, which made their commanders' order easier to reach.

However, the old man thinks it was impossible for amateurs to perform such orderly march.

Although the old man was thinking that, he did not insist on his opinion.

He seemed to understand the Earl's obstinate nature.

And toward such Earl, the old man thought rather than directly denied the Earl, it was better for him to guide the Earl by using doubt.

Such technique was actually an advanced negotiation technique.

"Well, if they trained only to march for a few months, it is easy to make people move that organized..."

Because he was also a commander of his army, the Earl's judgment was clouded by the thought that soldiers cannot be made within just mere a few months. -

Walked on the highway while in organized formation. Just to make amateurs to do that would be required a lot of work.

Furthermore, the one being instructed are slaves children.

Slaves children are like a living corpse, It would have been quite a laborious task to teach them.

However, the old man did not say anything since it would just be ended up displeased the Earl more.

Even if he said something, the Earl would not try to understand his words either.

"Well, it was just some words from the amateur me, please don't mind it..."

Hearing such words from the old man, the Earl gently nodded his head and turned his body.

"Well then, I will excuse myself now... I have many works needed to be done... Oh also, please visit the mansion once in a while. It would be nice if we can eat dinner together with Yuria, don't you think so?"

"Indeed... Then later..."

Hearing the old man's answer, the Earl nodded his head with satisfying expression and

went downstairs.

“What a hopeless guy... Although he did have the ability, he was too naive. Furthermore, he hated the commoners and slaves too much. Well, he was still a lot better compared with other nobles but... Geez, did he even understand that if he ended up getting crushed, I would be ended in trouble too...”

After the Earl left, the old man said some words in a low voice.

The expression on his face had completely changed.

His face, when he had a conversation with Earl Salzberg, was gentle and he also wore unreliable atmosphere around him.

Toward his son-in-law, he was taking one-two step back.

But now was different.

If Earl Salzberg saw the old man face now, the Earl would have revised his evaluation toward the old man.

The old man eyes glinted while looking at the distance.

“We cannot be careless against that army... To be able to make them move like that in such a short amount of time... It was the right decision Yuria, to put some surveillance earlier... If we deal with them carelessly, it would be annoying if they end up become hostile.”

The old man had begun to think some countermeasures.

While watching the black troops disappeared into the horizon.



“Father... May I enter?”

The old man who fell asleep on the desk jumped up in surprise after he heard the voice that called him.

It was unusual for him to fell asleep this early.

Before he fell asleep, it was still daytime, but now rather than candles, the moonlight illuminated his office.

He wondered why he could fall into such deep sleep.

“Yuria?”

The light on her hand illuminated her face.

She wore a black robe with hood covered her face.

Considering her usual dress. it was something unbelievable.

“Yes. I came because father called me... Did I disturb you, father?”

She sounded anxious about something.

The old man then asked Yuria with a somewhat tired voice.

“No, sorry for calling you so suddenly like this. I have something that I want to discuss with you... Did you already cleared the people around?”

Following the old man question, Yuria silently nodded her head and closed the office door behind her.

Yuria already understood why she was being called to this office.

“Why did you called for me? In order to keep my husband from being suspicious of us, I thought we supposedly contacted each other following the time we had agreed upon?”

“I'm sorry... I thought I would like to finish this matter as soon as possible...”

“Is this regarding Mikoshiba Ryouma?”

With uneasy expression, Yuria asked the old man while standing in front of the desk. And the old man responded by nodded his head slowly.

Even with that alone, Yuria was able to understand her father's mind.

It was filled with anxiety, just like her mind.

And just like her, the man who dominated Epiroz city economy also felt the same.

“Did father also thought that man as dangerous?”

“He is dangerous... Well, I'm not quite sure about who else he is dangerous to... But at least, for Earl Salzberg, he is dangerous... I did feel that he was dangerous when we talked during the time I delivered the food supply... But today, I've become convinced that he is dangerous.”

Even if the two of them asked each other what part of Ryouma was dangerous, they were unable to answer.

It was simply their sense as merchants, that alerted them of something.

It told them that this man is dangerous.

“My husband had complained to me... He said that father-in-law was a coward, just like me.”

It seemed that Earl Salzberg told his wife about the conversation they had at the watchtower when he had returned to the mansion.

“Earl Salzberg is the type of person who only recognizes visible power, such as military and money...”

“Such thought can be said as a realist, but...”

“I know... It does not mean he is incompetent. If he was such incompetent man, I won't hand you over as his bride... There's no need for me to do that...”

Looking down, the old man said those words while he clenched his hand hard.

(Right, if Thomas Salzberg was an incompetent person, no one would be willing to present their lovely daughter to such a man)

The old man have a lot of economy influence within Epiroz city.

That was why he knew all the bad conduct of Earl Salzberg.

The Earl's bad habit with women, the Earl's dirty money. The Earl was hardly suitable

for his daughter.

The only thing that made the Earl as his daughter's husband was because there's no choice...

It was a marriage that both of them never wished. That is why the two of them could never afford to go down together with the Earl. -

“Well, for now, there's nothing we could do. The development of the peninsula would take times. That man won't be able to move immediately. In the meantime, we can slip in some agent. Don't you agree?”

“Yes... I've made the Baron took some maid from the mansion together with him. In the future, we can expect a regular report letters.”

It was the girls that they had presented to Ryouma everytime he visited.

Because the girls' family lived in some village within the Earldom, they will never betray the Earl household.

Thus those girls was the most suitable spy for them.

“Umu, it would be bad if he ended up hostile toward us... But, it was also dangerous to leave that man alone... There was no other choice but to monitor him closely. Depending on how we handled the letters from those girls. We might be able to understand what the other side thinks...”

There was no need to sent a secret latter in particular.

Just from daily information.

Such as was there any food and water, how was the weather, who was with you, how was live there... Such information was meaningless on its own.

However, if one were managed to arrange the information properly, the people who knew its value will pay a thousand gold just to obtained it.

And if Mikoshiba Ryouma stopped the letters from being sent, that meant he was hostile.

Either way, there was no loss for the two of them to do this.

While feeling relieved toward her father calm judgment, Yuria timidly spoke a certain matter that she had hid inside her heart.

It was something she had hid in the depths of her heart ever since she became the Earl's wife.

“Father... If...”

Looked at Yuria fumble around with her words, the old man nodded her head silently.

“I know... But, It was still unknown at this stage... I cannot move yet. I'm sorry... Yuria...”

The old man then stood from the chair he was sitting on.

And silently the old man hugged Yuria's body.

He hugged her with full of kindness, just like a parent when they hugged their children when they cried.

Chapter 24

Wortenia Peninsula 3

Night time, Day 28th, 2nd Months, the Year 2813.

“We manage to come this far as scheduled huh? Finally tomorrow...”

Everyone sitting around Ryouma nodded their head with a strong spirit.

On their face, a fearless smile appeared.

Their territory. Their country.

Apart from longing for such things, within them, there was also an absolute self-confidence that they had been able to survive inside the dangerous territory.

After entered the peninsula, they had been attacked by monsters 14 times.

Assuming if they were hunters who intentionally followed their prey, it can be said that meeting 2-3 prey in a day indicated it was a good place for hunting.

And compared to that, the encounter rates within the peninsula was abnormally high.

Furthermore, all the monsters are dangerous species, that was classified as an intermediate and advanced creature.

The fact that they were able to killed those monsters without letting anyone died, although it caused several people injured, it can be said as a great accomplishment.

It was impossible for them to not felt exalted.

Three days had passed since they had entered the Wortenia Peninsula territory.

The road from Epiroz city had already ceased, and the troops stepped into the unexplored forest.

Tallgrass, densely populated trees, and tree branches, as if rejected their approach.

In order for them to march, they must carefully pay attention and at the same time deal with the tree branches.

However, despite the harsh environment, they were not troubled by either refueling water or choosing a place for them to camp.

Originally those tasks were the most difficult things to do.

However, Ryouma spent several months in advance to investigate the peninsula's topography. -

As a result of that, they were able to choose an efficient path through the peninsula's interior, while also had sufficient rest.

And now, while spreading out the map of Wortenia peninsula made by Genou, they were discussing the future move.

“Our movement has been proceeding as planned, the quality of our soldiers might be high but, this also due to the decision to let them grasp the topography beforehand as well, I think? After all, the information we had obtained from Epiroz city guild was not detailed enough.”

Everyone nodded in response to Sara's words.

Although the interior territory was unexplored, it did not mean that no one can't enter.

It does not mean that adventurers never go to the Wortenia peninsula for money either.

And the information brought by such people was being kept in the adventurer guild of Epiroz city. However, Ryouma ordered Genou to dispatched skilled people from his clan to investigate the peninsula as well.

And the result of that decision was great.

In the map spread out before them, map legends such as the type of trees, valley, rough flow of river are being described.

Without this map, their march through the peninsula would be hard.

At least, they wouldn't be able to come so far without anyone died.

“I think so too... It was the right decision to ask Genou to investigate the water source and camp field. Ganou, thank you for your hard work.”

The condition to search for water sources was different between adventurers which only have 10 members versus an armed force with 300 members.

It would be impossible to satiate the need of 300 people with only a spring of water that came out between rocks.

The condition for choosing a camping field also different.

Depending on the number of people, the conditions required for suitable place to camp naturally differ.

That was why it was natural for Lione to give her gratitude toward Genou who had managed to gather such information.

In actuality, it was possible to obtain a stable amount of water by using magic art, and the same can be said for finding a camping ground, but of course, it was better to do it manually since it would require less labor thus less fatigue.

“It was given that my clan had dispatched skilled people. However, this land was truly harsh, one pair of people we had dispatched to investigate the territory had not yet recovered their injuries. The case for pirates was true, but the most concerning matter is 'that', I think...”

“What you mean by 'that' is the demi-humans I suppose?”

Toward Sara's inquiry, the gentle atmosphere around them turned tense.

It was something that already had been reported before, but it was still caused them shock after hearing it again even after entering the peninsula.

“Demi-humans huh... I heard stories that some of them had survived but, I never expected them to be here...”

“I as well, Bolts. To think some of them survived... Furthermore, in the form of villages?”



For Bolts and Lione who were tasked with slaves training, they have only heard the future policies in the form of a rough report.

The army supply, selection of camps, the army marching path.

Apart from taking the command for slaves training, they were also had many other things they needed to do.

Thus they did not know Mikoshiba Ryouma thought regarding the demi-humans.

'In the first place, what is the definition of demi-humans in this world?'

The answer was every race other than human who had a bipedal method to walk, similar to that of a person, and also had a certain level of culture.

That was what define demi-humans in this world.

Beastmen with beast's head, dwarfs, elves, also other existence that speaks words and had certain culture.

However, people who lived in town or city would find their existence as nothing more than fantasy creature.

Well, even the adventurers who had ventured the unexplored land almost never encounter such existence.

Because they are legendary inhabitants of this world that were extinct by human hands a long time ago.

There were several causes of their extinction, but the biggest reason for it would probably the existence of the light God Meneoz.

In this world, there were exist Gods which the people refer to the six pillars. It was said that God Meneoz governs over light.

And a religious community who believed in Meneoz as God called themselves as light God Meneoz religious organization.

Their doctrine was simple. They regard light God Meneoz who was said to have created humans as supreme God and because humans were created by supreme God, they regard themselves as supreme beings.

Nonetheless, there was also other elements that made them religion.

However, religion was something that human usually created for the purpose of making everything convenient for them, thus it was natural if they also placed human as special existence. (*Opinion varies)

And at first, such element of doctrine was not a problem.

Even if some religion made some people think they are the chosen one, such things were supposedly not something that caused many problems.

Indeed since the light God Meneoz religious organization founded, 1,000 years had passed.

However, 400 years ago, the demi-humans was deemed as the unclean existence and the human began to drive them away.

In other words, since the organization was founded they did not make any racial elimination movement until 400 years ago.

Right, had 400 years ago two men did not appear in the history of this world, this world would be a place where beast-men, elves, and others lived.

However, the reality was different.

Although the demi-humans races had extinct since a long time ago, beyond the unexplored lands within the continent, there were rumors that a small number of demi-humans had survived.

“For the moment, we have no intention of working together with the demi-humans. I already told Genou this but, I don't want to touch the northern part of the forest where their villages were located.”

Hearing Ryouma's answer, Bolts and Lione widen their eyes.

In any case, his subordinates who were tasked to investigate the peninsula although managed to return were injured.

It felt unnatural for Lione to hear him said that he would overlook the incident.

Considering Ryouma's personality, it would be normal for him to exercised his power and sent some protest.

“To be honest, I just don't want to stimulate them right now... We already had Salzberg and Lupis on our back, I do not want to increase our enemies more than this... Besides, we also entered the vicinity of their village without permission. That was why I chose to leave them alone for now.”

After saying that, Ryouma draw a big red circle on the map.

It was a very large circle, nearly a quarter of Wortenia peninsula.

In other words, this circle indicated the boundary between them and Ryouma's group.

“Well I guess so... the situation in the Zalda is also chaotic right now, it would be bad for us to only create more enemies, I guess? Considering that we had carelessly crossed their territory, I guess, it was normal for them to respond with violence huh...”

Toward Ryouma's decision Lione voiced her agreement.

She herself did not have any particular repulsion toward the demi-humans.

She will fight if necessary, but she did not have any intention to intentionally fight against them.

And besides, Ryouma decision was very logical and fair one.

The attitude where he was not only thinking about his subordinates getting injured, from Lione's perspective, his judgment was favorable.

“But what are we going to do with the pirates? It would be bad if we don't have a harbor by the time Simone's preparation is over...”

After the matter of the demi-humans was over, Lione asked another concern.

For Ryouma and Simone's secret agreement, the existence of pirates caused them a problem.

Whether to win them over or exterminated them, it was a big problem.

Up until now, she was busy with other task but, now that they had entered the peninsula, Lione needed to know Ryouma's clear policy regarding them.

“There's only one conclusion regarding them. Clearly, I do not need them in my country.”

Ryouma responded to Lione's question in a casual manner while shrugging his shoulders.

Inside the tent, a fire should be lighted only to keep the temperature moderate.

However, everyone who heard Ryouma decision felt cold sweat ran down their spine.

Ryouma words and tone are calm, just like he was usually.

However, no man could misunderstand what was the meaning of his words.

“That means, we will have to annihilate them huh...”

Lione's words echoed inside the tent.



“Melissa, what's wrong?”

Coil called Melissa who had been stirring her stews with her spoon without trying to eat it.

They were eating their warm dinner while surrounding a bonfire.

The tense feeling during the march had become relaxed, around them laughter and chattering between comrades could be heard.

It was rare that they were allowed to drink a little bit of alcohol, many of them then act without restraint and made some ruckus.

In such hustle bustle, only around Melissa that the atmosphere was quiet.

Rather, it was too quiet.

“Unn... There's nothing...”

“Nothing huh? Let me guess... You think about Hana right?”

Toward Melissa denial, Coil asked back in return.

“...!!”

Seeing Melissa widen her eyes in surprise, Coil made a big sigh.

From the point of view of Coil who had shared everyday life as a team for several months with her, it was easy for him to understand her thought.

“There's no point thinking about the guys who ran away now is there? If they are lucky, they should be able to survive in some town...”

Coil said those words with uninterested tone.

For him, Hana who ran away was ungrateful and a traitor.

His hatred was not to the point that he wanted to chase and killed her, but it was to the extent that he does not mind if those who ran away died dogs death somewhere.

Such sentiment was oozing from his words.

“To say something like that...”

Melissa unexpectedly dislike the way Coil said his words.

Hana was a slave girl who was in the same group as Melissa.

But now, her figure was not here anymore.

Because the training was hard, she had escaped with a group of children who were unable to endure the training.

It was obvious that the one in the wrong was Hana who had escaped.

That alone Melissa understand. However, she was worried that Hana right now could not eat the same warm stew like she did right now.

“It cannot be helped you know... That fellow escaped due to the hard training, you see? Or Melissa also forgot the favor toward Mikoshiba-sama who had released us, and

sided with the guys who had ran away?”

Coil emotion was rising.

Tonight was a night that would mark a milestone for their lord, Mikoshiba Ryouma, it was the moment they would step their foot into the mysterious land called Wortenia peninsula. And finally, they would arrive at their destination tomorrow.

Even if one were to look at the ingredient used to made the stew for this dinner, and also being allowed to drink alcohol, it was clear that tonight they had been given a special consideration.

In such a day of celebration, Melissa was instead depressed thinking about the guys who ran away and betrayed their lord.

He could forgive her for looking like that.

“Those guys are traitors!”

Coil shouted those words.

It was a very strong shout. Caused the surrounding noise to stop for a moment, all the surrounding people line of sight was directed toward the two them.

However, Coil ignored those gaze.

The emotion which he usually able to suppress was sprigged up.

The training was painful. Some have failed to overcome the fear of actual battle.

It was not something that everyone could bear. Even Coil could understand that.

However, it was Mikoshiba Ryouma who made them a person from the lowly status as slaves.

Coil also understood that Ryouma never did all that out of good will.

However, it does not change the fact that Ryouma had given him the chance to crawl up.

In this world, there was a little opportunity for the weak to crawl up.

That was why Coil could not forgive those feeling.

Despite being given a good opportunity, they instead ran away without making a good use of it.

“That...”

Melissa could not return Coil cold words.

“Oi, Coil. Leave it at that...”

“Kevin...”

After he felt that Coil had become too emotional.

Kevin decided to start speaking after hearing the two conversations silently.

The leader of their team is Kevin.

If he told Coil to stop, Coil could not refute.

Coil himself did not have any intention of blaming Melissa.

“My bad... I lost my composure...”

Coil stood up.

“Where are you going?”

Kevin then looked at Coil with questioning gaze.

“I'm going to another group place...”

Said that Coil looked back at Kevin.

With firm gaze. Kevin then realized the meaning of that gaze.

“I understand... Clan, you should leave with Coil as well.”

Kevin who understood the meaning of Coil's word forcefully told Clan who had kept silent eating stew.

He must speak with Melissa by any means necessary, just the two of them.

Due to Kevin strong gaze, Clan stood up and silently followed Coil.

After confirmed that their backs were out of sight, Kevin hesitantly asked a serious question toward Melissa.

Chapter 25

Wortenia Peninsula 4

Day 28th, 2nd Month, the Year 2813, western continent calendar.

“You, you held some grudge, am I right?”

Kevin's expression was very serious that it could not be seen as a joke.

“Eh?”

She could not pretend that she didn't hear what Kevin had said.

After all, even though his voice was low, Kevin's voice had without a doubt entered Melissa's ears.

However, Melissa was unable to fully comprehend Kevin's words, thus she was taken aback.

“You, about Hana... I heard that you bear a grudge against Mikoshiba-sama due to those who ran away?”

Hesitantly he told her what he meant, Melissa who heard those words showed an astonished expression toward Kevin.

Kevin's words were too unexpected even for Melissa.

And gradually she understood the meaning of Kevin's words.

“That's! Why?!”

Melissa unintentionally raised her voice.

Jiii And Kevin just silently stared at Melissa's face.

It was sharp eyes that were trying to probe Melissa's heart.

Nobody knows how long these two people stared at each other. -

Crack

The sounds of burning trees entered Melissa's ears.

“...I guess you don't hold any grudge.”

Having said that, Kevin finally relaxed his expression.

Looking at Melissa's expression, he was finally able to understand her true feeling.

However, Melissa shouted ignoring Kevin.

No one can help it.

Because even for her, it was very unexpected that he was suspicious of her.

“Why? Why did you say something like that?”

She flared up toward Kevin with enough force that it was very different compared to the usual Melissa.

“Melissa... As expected, you don't understand do you?”

Kevin looked at how Melissa had responded, he looked amazed yet also felt somewhat convinced of something.

“What are you saying?”

“Just like I said... You don't realize the position you're in right now...”

Melissa frowned at Kevin's words.

“Even for me, I appreciate Mikoshiba-sama kindness you know?”

Melissa would never forget, the day when they perform the last trial, and finally being recognized as the member of his army.

At the beginning, the number of her comrades was 320 people, and at the end, on that day it had decreased to 196.

And toward those who had survived until the end, Mikoshiba Ryouma released them from slavery.

On that day, the contract of slavery who tied them down had become ashes.

For her and everyone else, they hold the debt of gratitude toward him.

After all, they had literally regained their lives once again.

And that feeling was something they could not easily forget.

However, Kevin shook his head.

“That is not what I meant... What I meant was after that...”

“After that?”

Melissa was still unable to understand Kevin's words.

She was indebted to Mikoshiba Ryouma, she understood that.

But, she wondered what exactly he meant by after that.

“Don't you know? Mikoshiba-sama was very merciful. He freed us from slavery, given us education, magic art knowledge, and martial art. He gives it to us, mere labor slaves. He also provided us shelter and clothing for living... But that was not entirely out of good faith. Of course, it does not mean that he did that for bad reason either. However, for a good reason, he had given us power.”

In regard to that, Melissa could also felt it.

Buying labor slaves for cheap, then given them education, magic art knowledge, and martial art.

She realized that Mikoshiba Ryouma did that not out of pity or sympathy toward the children.

“That esteemed person, he is testing us...”

“Testing us? What are you trying to say?”

Kevin then looked around, and he lowered his voice more, and answered Melissa's question.

“Whether or not we're ready to follow Mikoshiba-sama.”

Teaching slaves how to fight was equivalent to giving a mean to oppose him.

That was why usually people did not give such education to ordinary slave, those who were given such education would be regarded as war slave, subject to a more strict seal, and such war slaves could not use their power unless their Lord had given them the permission.

However, Mikoshiba Ryouma had never made any restriction order on the children he bought.

In fact, at the beginning of the training, many slaves had escaped from the harshness of the training, but they didn't take any measures to prevent anyone to escape.

“At the beginning, our team consist of five people right?”

Melissa nodded her heard.

At the beginning, Ryouma had made the children train as a team consisted of five men.

Five men that would act together as a team, waking up together, sleep together, eat together, and train together.

“But now, he added one mercenary to our team who only had four people now, which made our team into five men team once again. Do you understand what the meaning of this act?”

The group formation had completely changed compared to when they had started

The five men team consisted of children at the beginning was being dismantled, and

new team was formed with one mercenary and four children as its members.

She thought, Ryouma had simply placed one platoon leader with battle experience, but it seemed like it was not that simple.

Then a hunch appeared inside Melissa's heart.

“By any chance... Is this monitoring?”

Kevin nodded his head after he heard Melissa's murmur.

Melissa who saw that finally understood what Kevin and Coil had worried about.

“Listen alright, they watched us to determine whether or not we're good enough. And even now they still continue to do that.”

Kevin words entered Melissa's heart and became something she could not forget.



Next day.

Under the clear blue sky, Mikoshiba Ryouma and the 300 members of his troops arrived at the destination, it was a bay...

After pushed through the dense forest, and walked toward the west on the river banks which had width near 400m, the scenery in front of them greatly changed.

What they saw now was the white sand beach that extends toward the north and south.

Beyond that, blue sea with transparency enough to made people could easily saw the bottom of the ocean.

The waves that strike the beach are calm and the sea breeze tickles Ryouma and the others' nose.

Far away from the bay, he could see several silhouettes of island.

This place was truly a place where human hands had never touched, it was the embodiment of both, splendor and beauty of nature.



This place was surrounded by slightly elevated hills on three sides, it was at the same time can be used as natural defense, if he opened the forest, and used the big river that flowed into the sea, it would be possible for self-sufficient food production.

And furthermore, with little effort, the more than 10km coastline could be used as a harbor.

“I see... I heard the report but, this is really an amazing place...”

Two man was on one of the hills and directed their eyes to the beach under their eyes.

They both had came to the place to confirm the surrounding topography.

Genou talked with Ryouma while on horseback, and intense sunlight made both men squinted their eyes.

On Genou's face, proud expression can be seen due to the fact that his family had bring back the information of this location.

“Indeed. There's no other place as good as this one... Let's give them some good liquor later.”

Ryouma directed his eyes toward the surrounding topography.

Then he saw a little open space between the forest and the beach near the river.

There, he saw many people wandered.

He wondered if they preparing for the camping.

He could only saw that logs were being pierced into the ground one after another, and tent being spread open.

While looking at the sight, Ryouma nodded his head feeling satisfied.

The river that flowed into the sea can be used as drinking water and agricultural water, and for other practical defensive use, such as being used as water moat.

The abundant woods from cutting the trees can be used for a wide range of needs, as the forest being opened, the area could be used as agriculture lands.

The distance from Epiroz was also reasonable, it was 4 days of a walk.

It was also easy to develop self-defense in this place. The location can be said as very perfect.

Hearing Ryouma's praise, Genou could not help but shows a joyful expression.

It seemed it was not just because his hard work was being recognized.

Mikoshiba Ryouma knew what most important was to give subordinates reward for their achievement.

It was not just about giving money.

The important thing was to understand the achievement after performing hard work.

Good job. You've worked hard. Thank you.

Such small gesture was important aspect in regard to relationship between people.

“Thank you for your consideration. Those guys would be happy hearing my lord's words.”

“As you might know, being able to choose a base freely can be said as advantage. It was natural for us seeking the best place. However, I honestly never thought that it would be this good. Like this, we can immediately create village soon.”

Having territory where most places were left without human influence, Ryouma was able to choose a place to build his base anywhere he wanted.

Had within this peninsula there was a village, Ryouma won't be able to choose anymore.

Even if from the point of view that the place was disadvantageous, for the safety of people living in that village he must proceed the development started from that village.

Since Ryouma does not have sufficient military power enough to protect a village while he also building a new base.

“Young master! The tents are ready. Please come this way.”

Apparently, the camp had already finished being built.

Bolt voice could be heard calling for him.

Tomorrow they can finally open up the forest and start building the village.

“Everything will start from here huh...”

Ryouma turned his challenging gaze toward the south.

As if staring at the enemies that were not yet visible.

Chapter 26

One's Line Of Sight

Day 15, 4th Month, the Year 2813.

“Oi... I think my eyes have a problem...”

The man took off the telescope from his eyes. He then closed his eyes and rubbed his eyelids with his hand many times.

His hair which had been exposed by the sea breeze changed into light brown, and his skin was burning red due to the strong sunlight. He had the look of a skilled sailor.

Then a man with the similar feature can be seen holding the ship's steering wheel.

If one were to stand beside them, the strong smell would enter one's nose. Such smell was the result of a long time spent in the sea.

Together with the smell of the sea, the smell of iron and blood also emanated from their body. It was a testimony that these two people were not ordinary seafarers.

“No, I also saw the same thing with my eyes... Right now I started to doubt my sanity...”

The man who held the steering wheel answered while staring at the coastline.

Although they were reconnaissance of the ship that was currently 2km away, these men had been living in the sea for decades.

These two men had a high reputation for having good eyes among their fellow crew. And right now, both of them doubted their own eyes.

A cape that protrudes toward the sea like a horn of a cow.

In the middle between the two horns, they saw a town.

No, it may not be an exaggeration to call what they saw as a small port city.

As if trying to resist the darkness, torches light was set across the small city, and a bonfire was set ablaze grandly, this even made the two men able to ascertain the whole harbor.

“But you know... Is that even possible?”

“It was impossible and bullshit... But it was right in front of my eyes...”

The men holding the steering wheel spoke some curses.

“True... What should we say to the captain? They definitely won't believe us. It was such absurd story after all...”

Right now, what stand in front of them was an incredible sight.

If they report it as it is, their superior definitely won't believe them. They might even get accused of drinking alcohol then got drunk and saw a dream.

“What are you saying... Do you want to report some lie? If they found out about it, they might peel off your skins and make you into a shark's bait you know?”

Imagined the punishment they might've received, caused their body hair to stand.

It was punishment for those who break the code, and traitor. Indeed, several people had become prey to such punishment.

A scene from the past surfaced inside both men mind, caused their body to tremble.

“Then what should we do?! This is your problem too you know?”

They knew that their captain was ruthless. He especially hated lies.

But even if they reported to him as it is, they were sure that he won't believe it either.

They hardly think that the other side would believe what they were going to say.

(Fuck! To get the short end of the stick like this...)

If they were just bystanders then there won't be any problem.

They could just laugh at the unlucky guys. But it would be different if they were the concerned party. It involved their lives.

“We have no other choice. We will try to take a closer look tomorrow morning...”

“Are you sane? Captain had ordered us for wait-and-see, remember?”

If they betrayed their captain's order, they might've ended up as shark's food. That was the rule.

However, the man holding the steering wheel shook his head.

“Either way, we will still end up as shark food no matter which path we choose. If that was being the case, we should get more reliable information, although by doing that we ended up disobeyed captain's order... Or would it be better if we tried to escape instead?”

“Are you stupid? Where are we going to run away with this small boat?”

Their boat was one of those small boats equipped on a sailboat to be used for landing.

Although it had no problem to move using it near the coastal area, it was impossible to sail using it for long distance. Other than that, they were also only had a supply for one day left.

And it was only enough for their return trip to the mothership.

If this was an ordinary place then there won't be much problem, but since this was around the wortenia peninsula which was regarded as an unknown place.

If they landed on a wrong place, they might ended up eaten by monsters.

Although they were isolated from the power of a country, they did not have to worry about being caught by the authority. But at the same time, they also could've only reached the outside world by limited means.

“If that the case we only have one choice. Besides, even the captain, if we explained to him with certainty and reason, he won't killed us just like that.”

The moment the man said that the man holding the steering wheel shrugged his shoulders.

“Are you really sure about that?”

“Do you have another option then?”

His question was being answered by another question. He understood that there were no other options.

And no matter which options they choose, they felt their future was bleak. He dropped his gaze to his feet and fell silent.

(Damn it! No matter which choice we made, we're done for... I guess we have no choice but to ascertain the situation huh...?)

Fuuu

With a big sigh, the man lifted his face.

“Understood. Let's draw the boat toward the cape. We might be able to get to the shore before dawn.”

Hearing the man words, the men holding the steering wheel pulled the anchor. And the small boat quietly moved toward the shore.

“This is... So it was not our mistakes. I cannot believe it, how did they manage to make it this fast...”

The two men brought their boat to the northern side of the cape and climbed up the hill. What they saw was a breathtaking cityscape illuminated by bonfires.

“A town? No, with this kind infrastructure, it can be categorized as a small city...”

All the western banks of the coastline were using the stone pavement, it completely had the function as a port. A deep moat was dug on the east side, drawing in the river

water to flow toward the north, completely separated the city and the forest. On the south side, something like a castle wall can be seen.

Although it was not perfect, it had all the function as a port city. But with that alone, the two won't be this surprised.

But the thing that caused them to felt surprise was because this place was the wortenia peninsula, a place where monsters wandered around, and two months ago there was no such city here.

“Is that stones? At least that does not look like woods... How did they do this? Did they bring all the materials from Epiroz? No, that can't be... But, how else?”

Such mutter leaked from the man while he looked through his telescope.

Although they got more information compared to when they still on the sea but, on the contrary, they also ended up with more question inside their head.

If everything was built using wooden they both could understand.

If the two men overlook the question about the labor force, but since the surrounding was a forest. It was not impossible to do it. However, if it was using stone, then it caused doubt instead.

There were small hills surrounding the bay, but the two men could not see any quarry that produces the stone building.

There was also the possibility of using the coastal rock, but there was a limit to that.

Besides, if they really used that method, a quarry near the coastal line would be indispensable but, they both did not one.

With all of those considerations, that mean the people who built the city carried the material from another city, but unfortunately, this place was not an ordinary place. The road that leads to Epiroz had not yet been developed, it was near impossible to transport materials without the road. No, it might be possible with a large troop as an escort but, if there was such situation, some communication from their friend who was a spy at Epiroz city would contact them.

“Using sea route? No if they used that we should've noticed...”

As if answered his subordinate words, the men who were steering the boat previously said those words.

Although it was possible if the people who built the city used the sea route, it was impossible for ships carried such large amount of materials to slip past their watch.

And if such large fleet had crossed to this place then it would be impossible for them to not notice.

Their ship was watching the adjacent waters like a net, forget about sailing ships passed through, they also keep watching the coastline for any movement.

“Damn it! What had happened. It should have been only two months had passed? How the hell did they manage to build such city in such short amount of time?”

The hand of the man gripped the telescope with more power.

It was more than half a year ago that their friend who was a spy at Epiroz contacted them and told them that Wortenia peninsula was given to some nobleman.

Those who heard the report at that time scoffed at that nobleman.

For them who understood the environment of the peninsula, they regard the thought of developing the peninsula as a dream.

In fact, after the noble in question entered the Epiroz city, they heard that he never entered the peninsula.

Those who heard that report regard it as something natural. They thought that the noble choose to stay in Epiroz city after finding out that the peninsula had no value.

However, their thought was wrong. The proof was the city spreading in front of their eyes right now.

“We should head back... Whether or not captain believed us, I don't care, but this, we definitely need to report this...”

Cold sweat ran through their back. The hand holding the telescope was trembling.

He himself did not understand what he was being afraid of.

They immediately ran down the hill toward their small boat, and as soon as possible head toward their mother ship located in the north.

But they did not notice. The existence of a person watching them from the darkness...



Dawn breaks and the morning sun illuminates the city.

The bonfires across the city had finished their duty.

“Good morning. Ryouma-sama.”

“Morning, Laura... Is something happen?”

Although it was already dawn breaks, it was still 5:00 am in the morning.

It was early in terms of getting out of bed.

However, Ryouma answered Laura with a clear voice as if he had already awake since a while ago.

“Sakuya is coming...”

“Did the prey took the bait?”

With Laura's short words, Ryouma had already managed to predict what had happened. Rather than that, Ryouma had prepared everything since a month ago, thus if the prey did not take the bait it would've caused him trouble instead.

“Probably...”

Listening to Laura replied with plain words, an evil smirk appeared on Ryouma's face.

“If that the case, shall we clean up the peninsula immediately?”

Laura nodded her head silently in agreement.

Chapter 27

Heartless Fire 1

A sailing ship quietly anchored.

The ship was a fast ship which had three masts on it. Though right now all the sails were folded and the ship quietly waited for the captain's command.

It had an ordinary appearance. It was a western-style ship.

The total length of the ship was 30 meters. As a type, it was close to that of Galleon ship. It resembled the ships that were being built frequently during the era of the great voyage.

The only difference between this world ship and the Earth ship was that this ship did not have any firearms such as cannons.

Perhaps, the existence of gunpowder was not common.

On the north side of the bay, within the gap of the forest, several sharp gazes were looking at the ship.

Black dyed clothes and mask covered their entire face, making them became one with the darkness.

The dwellers of darkness.

They were not afraid of anything, even the monsters within the forest.

Because they were the most dreadful monsters...

“Everyone, just like we had planned...”

After Sakuya signaled, the leaves of trees shook faintly

And the presence around Sakuya disappeared. Only the same type of humans can perceive their presence.

This time she had to bring people with good skill among her family.

The bait had been set. After that, it was just the matter of waiting for the prey to take the bait.

“Well now, where is your base, please show me as soon as possible...”

A cold smile appeared on Sakuya's face. It was the face of a hunter.



“You... Do you think we could believe such story?”

Ten men surrounded the two men inside a dim room filled with sea smell.

Every time the lamp gently swayed to the left and right the shadows wandered the room.

All of their appearance were that of sailors, with burned red and black skins due to the sun.

However, with the smell of blood diverging from their bodies, one can predict what kind of occupation they had.

Cold voice struck the two men who were kneeling.

“But... we really saw it. With our own eyes... Right?”

The men talked to the other men who were silent on his side.

“Yes, I also saw it clearly with my own eyes. There was a town, with unbelievable scale over there. No, That is not a town I guess. It was more like a city.”

Listening to those words, one man who surrounded them began to spook.

“Cih, stop playing around. You guys, then explain, how did they manage to build a city in less than two months? If you can explain it then we will consider your story!”

Toward those words, ridicule and approval rose from the surrounding.

No one believed the two men story.

“About that... We really saw it...”

However, the man who knew that their lives were on the line keep trying desperately.

If their story were judged as a lie, they would surely be ended up getting killed. And surely, they would be killed brutally and made it as a lesson for the others...

“Don't be stupid! You guys must be drunk or something!”

Someone shouted.

“We did not! We really saw it!”

“It was true... We did not have any liquor or drug with us... We only abide the captain's command.”

The people who shouted grew silent but their eyes were still cold.

“Be silent for a bit...”

It was a low voice.

The voice was small enough that people might miss it if it was a normal situation. But, the words of that man clearly entered the ears of everyone present inside the room.

Everyone's eyes were directed at the place where the man sat.

He had a solid body, with a reddish-brown beard. His eyes emanated cold-blooded aura.

Hidden by the silk shirt, sunburned skins can be seen.

He had the style of men of the sea.

His name is Henry. It was a man who was feared by many other pirates, the one who had the nickname the 'Shark'.

Originally, he was a fisherman from a small village in the Kingdom of Ernestgora. He was a criminal who had killed a nobleman due to a tax dispute, and he escaped.

He was a man that will approach its prey like a shark, and eat them without saying anything.

“Captain...”

“W-We're...”

The two men turned their eyes toward Henry.

The two men lives depended on that man's mood.

“Well, fine then... It was hard on you guys huh... You guys can go an eat some meals...”

“Eh?”

Because his words were too unexpected, the man who blamed the two men the most leaked a stupid voice.

However, the man immediately blocked his mouth.

“Go.”

Ignoring the surrounding gaze, Henry ordered the two men to go by waving his hand. It was almost like he told a dog to leave...

“A-Aye. Pardon me for being rude...”

“Pardon my intrusion. Captain.”

The two men dropped their head then jumped out of the room immediately.

It was unknown whether it was because Henry's whim or not, but the two men did not question it since they didn't want to lose their life.

“Captain, what the meaning of this? Did you believe such absurd story?”

One of the man who remained inside the room asked Hendry.

They were the top brass within this ship, along with the chief navigator.

Unlike the other sailors, they were allowed to question Henry for a bit.

Of course, extreme caution was in place, since they did not want to impair Henry's absolute authority.

“Those guys, I cannot believe that there would be a time when they lied to me. Besides, if you want to tell a lie won't you tell something that has some truth in it? You guys should be familiar with this no?”

While stroking his beard with his hand, Henry turned his sharp gaze to the man who asked him before.

From the start, Henry did not think the two men lied to him. What would happen if one were to lie, no matter how stupid those subordinates were, they should've understood that well. Not only they would get killed, they would've been made into a lesson for the others as well.

Which mean, even if the two men story was absurd, they should've made a more believable story if they wanted to betray him.

Everyone silently nodded toward Henry's explanation.

Certainly, the two men's report was very ridiculous, but if one were to consider it calmly, the risk of telling lie was too high.

After all, everyone boarded this ship knew how cold-blooded their captain was.

“Certainly... But then, what kind of magic trick did they use? Two months had not yet passed since that young man entered the peninsula you know?”

They were able to understand that the two men did not tell lies. However, new doubt came to mind.

“Who knows. But, it would be possible if what they made was a fake...”

“A fake?”

Toward Hendry's words, the men looked puzzled.

The men were accustomed to a rough situation, but they were not that good in terms of using his head.

Because inside of their head was occupied by wine and women.

“If the two of them looked from the distance, they can be deceived as many times as they liked right? Although the two of them said they had confirmed them up close. They only confirm it from nearby. Unexpectedly, those might just be Papier-mâché made by using the woods...”

“Papier-mâché is it?”

“Well, that was just one of the possibility...”

“Captain... What should we do then? I assume that we have no choice but to go and confirm it ourselves... That is what I thought but...”

As a matter of fact, no one was going to argue about that.

If that the case then they should just go and confirm it.

However, Hendry shook his head denied it.

“No, that is not necessary...”

“But...”

“You, are you questioning my decision?”

Henry interrupted the man's words with his sharp gaze.

“If we go there now, we won't make it in time for the monthly meeting. Are you going to explain things to those guys?”

Listening to Henry's words everyone held their breath.

“...T-That is...”

“See, we need to head back first. Certainly, whether or not the others would believe it is indeed a question...”

In Henry's mind, two faces with the same rank as him surfaced.

They were people he did not want to meet too often.

However, the story this time cannot be decided by Henry's arbitrary decision.

To that annoyance, Henry unintentionally clicked his tongue.

“Either way, we cannot move by ourselves. Whether or not we're going to attack or negotiate with them, we need to talk about this during the meeting first...”

At the present stage, everyone can only guess.

However, one thing was clear.

Whether or not it was a trap, it can be said that Mikoshiba Ryouma had already known that there existed pirates that made their base within the peninsula.

(This have turn troublesome indeed...)

He thought that some stupid noble had been given a reclamation project on a whim but, it seemed like his thought was too naive.

The man called Mikoshiba Ryouma, he had begun to carefully and seriously reclaim the barren peninsula.

“Alright, raise the anchor. We will head back to the harbor!”

Under Henry's command, the anchor was rolled up and the sail was set.

The ship began to slowly move and gradually raised its speed.

They were heading toward their base...

Their base was a town, located at the northern end of the Wortenia peninsula.

At the place where no men should've existed. The inhabitants of the town have survived strongly.

Where they came from, they didn't even understand it themselves.

Most of them were descendants of the people expelled to the peninsula. Some were criminals with prize money tag on their head. The place was a paradise for them, some of them arrived via the sea, some arrived after going through the forest filled with monsters.

In a sense, the place could also be called hell on earth.

Certainly, no power was able reached the place. It was a town which was not under the arrogance of nobles or the power of a country. People may have called it paradise if it was only that much. But if they heard the one who governed that town, everyone would've called it hell instead.

The power who ruled that town. The strong one, that was the only rule of law within that town.

Gender and age didn't matter.

It was such a town.

A small town surrounded by cliffs. As if it was a town that afraid of people's gaze...

Chapter 28

Heartless Fire 2

“I see... So you come back nonchalantly just like that?”

Saying that, the woman gulped the alcohol from the beer mug.

She had blonde hair that had been exposed to the salt breeze. She was not ugly but her face can be considered as mediocre. She had a small breast on her chest, making her charm as a woman quite lacking.

However, despite being like that, no man would go against her in this town.

She had survived in the world dominated by men. She possessed sharp eyes and intimidating aura around her.

And her name is Luida

Just like Henry, she had nickname circulated among the people of the town, and that nickname was 'Sea Snake'.

“Does the shark came back just to be barbequed? I never thought that you would bring such story in this place...”

The man with bald head sitting across Henry muttered such words as if in sync with Luida's words.

His name is Andre.

He was a man boasting thick arms and nicknamed as the 'Tsunami'.

His sharp eyes looked at Henry while he tapped his bald head with his hand.

The three people surrounded the roundtable were the ruler of this town, also a captain of their own pirates' group.

They used Galleon ships type as their flagship, also they commanded several medium ships such as Caravel ship and Carrack's ship, and several others small ships... Those

ships were operated around the Wortenia peninsula.

Today was the regular meeting held once a month.

It was an important meeting where they would be decided the future policy of the town.

And right now, the biggest problem on the table was regarding Mikoshiba Ryouma who had become the owner of the peninsula.

They had made a base in the peninsula because it was abandoned by the country.

And now official authority had come to the peninsula. Which they could not ignore.



“Do you really think like that?”

It was a calm voice.

(Well, it was natural for them to feel suspicious like this... If I were in their position I would also felt suspicious about this kind of story...)

Such thought calmed down Henry's heart.

Ludia shrugged her shoulders and Andre just kept silence after they heard Henry's respond.

They both understood Henry's ability.

Henry was one of the bosses who handled this barren city.

Thus his ability was something no one can refute. Since there's no such a thing as a noble privilege in this town.

If Henry's power decline and he became weaker compared to others, he would already be dead and his dead body would have been thrown into the sea.

For him to stay alive in this town. was a testament to Henry's ability. -

“I've done everything I can do right now. Certainly, I also thought of landing but, I was unable to throw away the possibility of it being a trap as well.”

Henry glanced at the two people as if asking them whether there were complaints in his judgment.

The three people gaze clashed.

“A trap huh... Indeed that might be possible.”

“That possibility itself means that bastard called Mikoshiba was a cautious person...”

“Right...”

Finally, the three people fell into silence.

Such long silence ruled the room.

The problem now was what they should do. Depending on their decision, their destiny can be changed.

“Should we attack them decisively? The enemy numbers are around 300 right...? If we go and fight them together, we could bring more than five hundred. The prospect of victory is high even if we use brute force, don't you think so?”

Andre was the most hot-blooded person among them, and he proposed a frontal attack.

His nickname of 'Tsunami' came from the way he attacked his enemy.

He would draw near his prey quietly like a falling tide, and then struck his prey with overwhelming force. *<TLN: When Tsunami happen, usually the tide would be pulled several hundred meters away from the beach, before the wave struck back... >*

It was not a simple brute force either. He would prepare the surprise attack meticulously. Which it was not easy to do.

Andre became one of the rulers of this town because he had the power to perform such tactic.

However, Henry shook his head toward Andre's suggestion.

“No, making a move unskillfully would be unwise... Performing surprise attack on unprepared enemy aside, this time they might have prepared something, which in turn will make the surprise attack disadvantageous for us instead. Their numbers might be small, but they seemed to have mercenaries among their ranks...”

If it were the normal situation the three of them would take Andre's proposal without any hesitation.

“There's too much uncertainty huh? If that the case then, what should we do?”

Although Andre proposal was being declined, because the one who did it was Henry, he seemed didn't mind it.

Certainly, the number of people serving under Henry was larger, and their combat experience was also abundant.

However, their actual battle experience was mainly at the sea.

When they fight on the sea, they were merciless people who would crawl under the enemy's skin. However, their land battle experience was mostly only when they plundered villages and port town.

And because their aim was to rob, rarely they fought on land.

In addition, their biggest weapon was a surprise attack.

No matter how much they had attacked towns with relaxed security, it would have been impossible for them to attack a well-prepared town head-on.

“Then, what should we do? Keep silent and persist in non-interference?”

Although they were on the same peninsula, their town and the place where Ryouma had built his base were split by a forested area where monsters wander around.

Their town itself was also hidden from people eyes and hard to find due to the town being surrounded by cliffs.

Luida's suggestion was passive move, but it was also not wrong.

Her nickname 'sea snake' came from her being able to wait as long as necessary.

“You meant waiting for an opportunity huh?”

Hearing Henry's words, Luida grinned and nodded her head.

There were many people who would choose to move, but only a few people were able to choose to not to move and waited for an opportunity.

The reason why she was able to reign was that she was able to wait quietly until the power of the previous generation wane.

And not only just waiting. She also had been engaged in scrapping the power of her predecessors as well as accumulated her own power and made sure that the opportunity came sooner.

It was like a poison that corrodes the body...

That was the reason why she was called the 'sea snake'.

But then again, Henry shook his head toward her suggestion.

“That move in itself is not wrong but, this time around, I think we should have a negotiation with Baron Mikoshiba...”

Hearing his words, Andre and Luida starred at Henry while full of doubt.

That was because, his words was too unexpected for them.

“Negotiation huh... Is it to make Mikoshiba drop his guard before we attack him?”

“That sound not bad, but you guys should remember that Mikoshiba is wary of us. Besides, if the rumor about him is true then, he is someone that would not drop his guard from just a mere negotiation...”

There was the saying 'big body have little wisdom' but, Andre had more wisdom than average people.

It was a matter of course, since previously he was a trade merchant who had crossed between the continents.

He ended up becoming a pirate due to the huge debt he got after his trade ship was struck by a storm.

Right now he had become a man who had no problem when using rough means but, he was once a man who had built a large wealth.

Due to the many experiences when he was a businessman, among the three people, he was the most capable when it came to ascertaining someone.

From Andre's point of view, Mikoshiba Ryouma was a man that was good at the scheme, and he also does not believe in others.

It was not easy to gain trust from such human being.

That was why Andre and the others need to plot something, but Ryouma might end up scheming against them in turn.

However, once again, Henry shook his head.

“That's not it... The negotiations are just the beginning. Our aim is to be under Mikoshiba's umbrella. That is what I really thought...”

“Are you serious?”

Toward Andre's question, Henry nodded his head.

“You guys should've already realized right...?”

No one said anything. The people who lived in this town had vaguely realized, and for the three people present inside the room, this problem was bigger than the problem Mikoshiba Ryouma.

“Certainly... We have no future... But...”

“I've also thought about that but... In the first place, will Mikoshiba willing to come and negotiate with us?”

However, Henry looked straight into their skeptical eyes.

“But, even if we continue our pirate business as it is, we have no future... Right?”

In those words, they fell silent. That attitude proved that Henry's words were correct.

In actuality, their chance to perform plunder was not many.

Certainly, plundered a village would garner them a big income.

Although they were exploited by the nobles, the commoner would save(goods) like a commoner should.

And plundering rob all of those saving. Speaking of agriculture, it was equivalent to eating everything one had harvested without leaving enough to use for sowing next year.

As a result, it cannot become continued revenue.

At first, it was not like that.

At first, they had robbed one village and town each and regularly took money from the surrounding towns as a form of taxes.

Piracy without causing blood and tears to spill. If they attacked, the women and children would have been mercilessly killed, raped and being sold as slaves.

Such image binds the ordinary people's heart who does not possess the power to fight and ended up paying the pirates to escape their fears.

For their own safety...

And the same case also happens when attacking a merchant ship.

One can attack a ship when they passed the route.

When the pirates appeared they would lose their goods and lives. Who would sail via such route then?

In many cases, pirates can ask merchant ships to pay a toll fee.

They decide on the price by the percentage per load.

Otherwise, the next one would not come pass the route.

Of course, they also need to sacrifices some to maintain their pirates' image, but it was not their method to completely rob their prey.

However, when Henry came to power only scorched land remained.

When they attacked the villages, they rob and kills everyone.

It was also the same when it comes to merchant ships.

Sailors who survived were sold as slaves and their goods were completely looted.

Around ten years ago, such method increased in frequency, and now it had become their method of modus operandi.

"I know that... Even now, it has become harder and harder to find prey..."

Luida nodded toward Andre's words.

The Merchant ships have stopped from going through the northern route.

Currently, they were using the port town located at the eastern end of Ernest Gora.

From there they would cross the continent via land route and transport it to the trade

city of Fulzad.

Compared to mass shipping, the labor cost and other expenses were much higher, but it was much better than being robbed by pirates.

This was caused by Henry's rough manner of doing things.

“Our current profit is only barely enough for us to continue living... We can't do things like we do a long time ago anymore.”

A long time ago, there were not many citizens in this town. Even if it was increased, at most there were only several families a year. It was never increased more than 10 people once at a time. But, people suddenly flowed in a decade ago.

The reason for that was obvious. That was the time when Ortomea Empire invasion became active.

As Ortomea Empire expanded their territory, the countries that had existed in the middle of the western continent were destroyed one after another.

In the process of that, many people escaped the difficulties and threw away their hometown.

Of course, there were also many people who had chosen to live as the citizen of the Ortomea Empire.

However, those who refused to become the Empire citizen they seek a new place to live one way or another.

While most of the people from the privileged class were either choose expulsion or execution.

Those people mostly return to the earth(died) under an unknown sky but, some lucky men would reach new place.

And some of them had flowed into an unknown town that existed on this Wortenia peninsula.

“The judgment I made that time was wrong... When we looked at the current situation, it was a complete mistake...”

“To say those words at this time, nothing will change you know?”

Luida spoke comforting words toward Henry who spit out his irritation.

Even if they reconsidered the situation at that time, the conclusion was only one. But looking at the result now, that conclusion was a mistake.

Although it can't be helped when looking at the enthusiasm of those days.

A number is a power.

If the inhabitant of the town increased, they won't felt threatened by the monsters.

Little by little they had become big.

No people hated when the town where they lived being expanded.

Especial for those who had been living while avoiding other humans.

Initially, only some lucky people who broke through the forest area arrived but, the number gradually escalated.

He ordered his ships to go to some town and invited some people who want to join the pirates.

At first, everything was going well. The number of pirates increases, and the scale of the ship and town they had attacked grow steadily.

They started to not feel afraid of the troops that sometimes being sent by the neighboring countries. Thus, the waters around the Wortenia peninsula have literally become Henry's territory.

For Henry at that time, he had never expected that he had opened a door to hell.

The town population grows. Thanks to that the surprise attack by the monsters inhabiting the peninsula decreased. -

The town population then grew once again. Thanks to that, the scale of the town they attacked get bigger.

It was natural if they ended up thinking that they were in a seventh heaven.

So they ended up forgetting something.

That they themselves didn't produce anything.

There were limits to the toll taxes as well as payments from the villages and towns.

Even so, they need to live...

However, by increasing the number of inhabitants of the town unplanned, it was impossible for them to maintain the town with that income alone.

And the balance that collapsed once never return back...

When the number increased the profit had become bigger but to maintain such number they also needed a bigger revenue.

That was the start of the endless cycle of barely keeping the business going.

The result, they gradually increase their plundering.

They didn't have other option since it was hard to aim for self-sufficiency at their base.

“We ended up overdoing it... Now, other than the whimsical one, none crossed the sea around this area. We also already plundered and exhausted the town and villages near the coastlines...”

Both, Andre and Luida remained silent after they heard Henry's words.

But they accurately read the hidden intent behind Henry's words, and their eyes shone brightly.

“But, that's why, there's room for negotiation with Mikoshiba. There's a room for us, to sell our power...”

Chapter 29

Heartless Fire 3

Night time, Day 18th, 4th Month, the Year 2813, Western continent calendar.

“A room for negotiation huh...?”

Andre murmured those words while stroking his beard.

For him, as a former merchant, Henry's words seemed to be feasible enough.

It was not possible for them to become military force such as the navy, or engage in trade as escort for a merchant ship. -

The problem was whether or not Mikoshiba Ryouma had such interest.

Ryouma had to keep in mind that pirates were an occupation that was hated by the general public if he wanted to employ them.

It would have been impossible for negotiation if the other side were concerned regarding justice.

Whether or not Ryouma had the capacity to accept the good and evil...

Such thought appeared inside Andre's mind.

“We will hand him a present... 'And we will see whether or not that Mikoshiba guy would listen to us while we hand the present over, are you sure?’”

Luida who had listened to the conversation in silent butted in. Toward her question, Henry nodded his head.

Certainly, her concern was a matter of course. Originally that was a method to create a proper intermediation.

Of course, it was impossible for pirates but at least to create a better image of them they needed to hand over some present.

“A present huh... What should we give him? Money?”

Andre questioned the two other people.

It was not a bad option.

With money, it was a straight ball without any twist, it was something that everyone needs and no one hate free money.

Since the use of money was infinite, there were never times when someone said they had enough.

But on the other hands, money can't impress other people.

Andrew had suggested in using money because he had used the money for bribes several times.

While money had an immediate effect, it also had no sustainability.

Unless they planned on giving bribe regularly, it was something not suitable for a gift.

“If possible, I wanted to give something that would impress him and gives us advantages. The rarer the better...”

Something with value and quality.

Something that was rare and hardly available was better.

In addition, it must not be something consumable. It would be better if it was something that would remain for a long time.

Such thought crossed Henry's mind. -

“Something unusual and can give us advantages huh...”

“Do you think of something?”

Toward Henry question, Andre was lost in thought.

There some rare articles when they robbed the trade ships being put in the warehouse.

In this world where the logistic route was not developed yet, items imported from other continents are high in value.

However, on the other hand, many of the items that are now sleeping in the warehouse are not practically rare.

Spices, accessories, clothing, arms. Something that had clear use had already been used, and the demand was high.

On the contrary, things such as books, paintings, antiques were good items for those who have interest in it, but for those people who had no interest toward it, it was just a garbage. In short, the demand for those things was low.

Speaking of the items inside the warehouse, it was filled with those items that were hard to be changed into the so-called gold.

“In the current state where they just started pioneered the peninsula, it would be unimaginable to give them work of arts...”

Although it was a good present if the peninsula had finished being cultivated, giving them a work of art in the current situation where they were just started would only cause them an obstacle.

It had no meaning as a present if the person being given did not feel happy.

Silence dominated the room once again.

Both Henry and Andre understood that their survival depends on this negotiation with Mikoshiba Ryouma.

“But honestly, you guys brains are really lacking huh...”

Voice of ridicule broke the silence.

Henry turned his sharp gaze toward Luida and strike the table.

“What do you mean?”

His voice was low. However, it was clear that it was filled with hostility.

What they had in common were strong will and strong physical body. And ambition to overpower the others. None of them have the intention of keeping silent when being ridiculed.

“Wait, Henry... What do you mean by that words, Luida?”

Although he also scowled at Luida with full hostility, Andre stopped Henry who was about to attack Luida at any moment.

Andre's gaze was asking for Luida's words true meaning.

“It was nothing impressive. If we have to show valuable goods, then it would be items that can only be obtained on the peninsula you know...?”

Andre and Henry then looked at each other face and think about Luida's words.

“The things that can only be obtained within the peninsula?”

Henry muttered those words and Andre's mind began to think about something.

“I see... 'That' huh?”

“That's right. People would be impressed if they were being given such present, especially a man.”



Confirming Andre's question, a somewhat vulgar smile appeared on Luida's face.

Henry who saw such smile on her face finally understood what she meant.

“You bitch... We struggle hard to get that you know?”

Henry turned his sharp gaze at Luida again.

That was a matter of course. Since the item she talked about was not something that easies to get.

It was an item that needed great effort and luck to get. It was an item that was hard to get no matter where.

“I know that... But, isn't that why it was worth giving it? Any man would be pleased with that gift...”

Originally Luida was a slave brought to this town as a prostitute.

However, since she was judged won't be able to take any customer with her appearance, she was instead being given the job of managing the prostitutes, which in turn bloomed her talent.

The talent of managing people and manipulates people.

Luida was good with that kind of job.

Through prostitution, she gradually expanded her influence.

It was a good thing that there was not much entertainment in this place.

The use of women, she controls the pirates by using their desire to touch women.

Like that she expanded her influence. Until she managed to sit as one of the three leaders.

“Very well. I will agree with you... It's not like we can find a buyer for 'that' item immediately either. If that the case then, might as well use it as a gift here...”

“Cih... I guess there's no other choice huh...”

Toward Andre's words, Henry nodded his head while clicked his tongue.

The item was something precious enough that he does not want to exchange it for money.

But if they give Mikoshiba Ryouma 'that', he might be willing to negotiate.

Such thought was floating inside the three people's head.



*Kon*kon*

When the morning sunlight entered the windows, the sounds of the wooden hammer can also be heard.

Furthermore, there were also other voices such as people shouting and the sound of walking people.

In term of the population it was comparable to that of a village but hearing the noise it felt like a vibrant city.

This was how it sounds when people with a sense of purpose lived.

In front of Ryouma eyes, the face of the people was filled with hope.

(The city finally shows its shape... A harbor that can handle large vessel, a stone paved road. The city wall is also already at a tolerable level... We also had already discussed the other problems, and the shipment from Simone also have already arrived. After this, we just have to wait for Sakuya return...)

The city already building houses to accept immigrants.

If the last problem was finished being dealt with, the Wortenia peninsula can finally be reborn.

Preparations were already in place. What they needed to do was to wait for the proper time.

“Ryouma-sama. May I come in?”

“Sure... Laura? Did something happen?”

Ryouma who indulged in thought while looking at the scenery of the city from the window of his room turned his eyes toward the door as he heard the sound of knocking.

“The report...”

On such Laura, bewildered and astonishment can be seen mixed in her expression.

It must be because an unexpected had happened.

(What happened I wonder...)

Ryouma urged her to speak with his eyes.

And after listening to her report, a surprised expression appeared on Ryouma's face this time.

The room was crude.

Pillars and walls made of woods.

Although it was being built firmly, the room was still looking bare, it was unthinkable that this room was an aristocrat office.

Because the room was used by a man holding a rank, it was made as wide as possible.

However, inside the room, the furniture was only a coarse wooden desk and chairs, which made the roughness stands out even more.

In a sense, it might be natural for this.

Ryouma only used this room twice a day. It was only the time when he received a report in the morning and night.

Of course, there were also things such as the list of goods that needed to be purchased from Simone and confirmation details, but the number of cases of that was overwhelmingly small, and most of the minute detailed work had been left to Boltz and Marfisto sisters to handle.

Ryouma only needed to confirm a few documents that they could not settle by

themselves.

If one were to asked what Ryouma job them, every morning he had gone out as a field overseer and took the initiative and participate in town's building.

He personally took the initiative to move his body.

Although it was sly of him, in this world where class society was strict, it was brought about a huge effect.

In any case, for many soldiers, aristocrats are those who rule and exploit them.

A nobleman exists only to rule, exploit, and use the people without doing anything.

Actually, those aristocrats have a great responsibility and duty, but from the viewpoint of the person who was being controlled then, such negative view could not be helped.

And Ryouma who was one of the ruling classes mixed himself with the common people.

Such move sharply reduced the distance between Ryouma and the soldiers.

They both sweat and exchange words together.

Have the same meal, and sleep in a same poor bed.

Ryouma action caused him to quickly gained his soldiers trust.

Everything was going well. Yes, until Laura brought her report...

(Fuck... What should I do...)

While staring at the parchment on the desk, Ryouma clicked his tongue.

It was a question that he had repeatedly asked toward himself.

The night had already dominated the neighborhood.

Ryouma who heard Laura's report, stayed inside his office room all day.

Without taking lunch, Ryouma repeatedly asked that question over and over again.

No, the conclusion had already been decided.

But the problem was how he going to realize it...

(Demi-human eh?...)

A letter of negotiation request had been sent by the pirates. The gift that was written in that letter had caused Ryouma to suffer for a half a day.

Demi-human.

It was rumored to have existed within the Wortenia peninsula, in general, it was a race that should have been extinct.

The things that had been delivered by small boat this morning was a latter inviting Ryouma for a negotiation and one demi-human.

She had dark skin similar to the color of amethyst. She had silver hairs, and her ears were sharper than human's ears.

It was a race generally called the 'Dark Elf'.

A living jewel.

Looking at how beautiful she was, such words were very appropriate.

Any man would end up being the prisoner of her charm.

No, even women would also felt the same when they saw her.

Not only Laura and Sara, but also the people who had abundant life-experience such as Bolts and Lione had acknowledged the beauty when they saw her.

Certainly, it was a unique gift that can only be obtained within the Wortenia peninsula.

Ryouma was also a man, and all men would be pleased when they were being given a dark elf as a present.

In that sense, it can be said the Pirates' selection was right.

However, they mistook something.

And this misunderstanding would cause everything to go crazy...

Chapter 30

Heartless Fire 4

Daytime, Day 25th, 4th Month, the Year 2813, Western continent calendar.

On the port's pier, several Galleon ships were quietly anchored.

“““Welcome, Baron Mikoshiba-sama!!!”““

Approximately 10 people welcomed Ryouma after he goes down from the Galleon ship to the port's pier.

The leading people of those people were Henry, Andre, and Luida.

And those who lined behind them were their aides.

“My name is Andre. One of the leaders of this town. Although this is just a remote town, we will provide our best hospitality.”

Andre bowed his head deeply after he took one step forward.

He was able to do this kind of scene because of his former occupation as a merchant.

Contrary to his looks, his movements were flowing perfectly.

Following him, those who stand behind him also lowered their heads.

It seemed that they had arranged all of this beforehand.

Since despite being pirates, they had welcomed Ryouma with a perfect etiquette.

“No no, thank you for picking us up, and nice to meet you too...”

After saying that, Ryouma nodded his head lightly.

If this was Japan, this kind of greeting was barely passable but since class system

existed in this world Ryouma's manner made people felt a considerable sense of incongruity.

Furthermore, Ryouma was a noble while Andre was a commoner and a criminal...

Because of that, originally there was no reason for Ryouma to bow his head to Andre.

Andre who saw Ryouma's act felt strange but he was not foolish enough to say something at this place and offended him.

He then proceeds on showing the town toward Ryouma with a smile on his face.

“You seems to have bought only a few attendant?”

Luida looked at the soldiers who came down from the ship following Ryouma while tilting her head.

Roughly counted, there were 20 people following Ryouma.

They wore black leather armors and holding spears in their hands, they were completely armed as if about to go to war and yet their number was too small for that.

She guessed that he brought the minimum number necessary for his defense.

“Indeed, I only brought a few...”

“Huh?”

Ryouma answered her ambiguously while Luida could've only tilted her head in wonder.

It was actually a good thing for Luida and the others that Ryouma only brought a small number of escort soldiers.

However, they could not felt satisfied with that alone.

Of course, Luida had no intention of tricking Ryouma.

They really wanted to join Ryouma.

However, that was Luida and her comrades' convenient thought, for Ryouma it was another problem altogether.

Indeed if one were to take Ryouma's words at face value then it can be meant that he only brings the necessary escort toward a friendly partner, but Luida felt something was wrong.

Luida who was standing on the pier with Henry on her side asked a question toward Henry while looking at Ryouma walking ahead of them with Andre leading him.

“You... What do you think?”

“Ha? About what?”

“What do you mean about what... Of course, it's him... Don't you feel something is wrong?”

“Is that so? I don't feel anything wrong particularly. On the other hand, I feel the opposite? He is treating us equally after all. His act is not something that normal nobleman would do. As expected, maybe it was because he was a former commoner. He is not your ordinary aristocrat.”

Henry grinned while stroking his beard.

There was a lot of aristocrats who will not bow their head no matter how much one bowed one's head and yet, Ryouma returned Henry's greeting who was a pirate, although it was a light reply.

That attitude shocked Henry.

However, such attitude did not leave any bad impression.

In fact, Henry who had been oppressed by the noblemen in the past felt fresh and such an act left a good impression on his heart...

“What I feel wrong is precisely that... Why did he give us that amount of courtesy?”

“Well, that obvious, it must be because he knows our value. Besides, his act is leaving a good impression no? What is the problem when the other side shows a friendly attitude?”

“But that... Don't you think it was too convenient for us?”

This was what Luida was worried about. The situation was too convenient for them.

That also included Ryouma's attitude.

Although it would have been natural for him to show a high-handed attitude despite being a former commoner, and yet, he didn't show such attitude at all.

“Haa? What are you saying? In an effort of making a good impression, we've sent the demi-human to him you know? If his impression toward us was bad even after giving him that, it would have been a great loss for us... In the first place, wasn't it you who suggested on giving that demi-human to make a good impression?”

Currently, the number of demi-humans Henry had captured was 3 people.

All of them were dark elf women but, the one he had sent to Ryouma was the youngest and the most beautiful one among them. -

Because their rarity was too high, it was impossible to sell them immediately but, if one were to sell them with a wholesale price then it would be easy to get tens thousand to hundreds of million baht.

Henry thought that Ryouma took a friendly attitude because he had given him that much as a gift.

“That...”

Luida finds it hard for her to rebuke Henry's words and decided to keep silent.

“Suspicion must be handled according to the time and situation you know? Everything now has been working well after so much effort. Don't read too much into things, you might hurt that person's mood instead you know?”

As he remarked that, Henry left the pier while he shook his head as if feeling amazed.

“I guess... so...”

Everything developed according to their plan.

They were able to establish a place for negotiation with Mikoshiba Ryouma, and his impression on them was not bad either.

The reason why Ryouma only brought a small number of escort might be because he trusted Luida and her gangs.

Luida left the pier while thinking that to shake off the uneasy feeling and doubt inside her heart.

Everything had been going well. She can't be suspicious and made everything turn bad. Such thought crossed her head.



“Please enjoy your self. Someone will bring something cold immediately.”

“Alright then, please excuse me.”

Following Andre words, Ryouma relaxedly sat down on the sofa, and in short moment the door was being knocked as if the timing had been planned.

“Come in.”

In respond to Andre's words, a woman came in while bringing drinks and cakes on a tray. Her age was around 30 years old.

Her appearance was not bad but, somehow she gives off a vulgar aura.

Perhaps she was a woman who had worked in a bar and being made to serve for this time.

She put the drink and cake on the table while looking inexperienced with etiquette, her hands were obviously shaking, then after that, she left the room.

(She desperately trying not to ruin my mood huh... What a troublesome act...)

Ryouma desperately held down the cold sneer that spring out of his heart. -

“The two who stands there, how about it? Do you want a cold drink as well?”

“No, please don't mind us.”

Laura rejected Andre's invitation without changing her expression.

As to who stand behind Ryouma, it was the Marfisto sisters.

There were only four people inside this room, Ryouma, Andre, the Marfisto sisters, and a guard.

“Is that so... Then please excuse me for having the other guards to relax in another room.”

Having being curtly refused by the sisters, Andre said those obvious words to keep the conversation going.

To begin with, it would have been impossible to host the entire escort in this room.

However, responding to his obvious words, Ryouma lowered his head slightly while smiling.

“I understand. I'm sorry for I've caused you some trouble like this...”

“Please don't mind it. It was our intention to provide our best hospitality... By the way... Your Excellency...”

Ryouma smiled toward Andre who was at lost as to what to say.

“Is the matter you had suggested the other day was true? Regarding joining me...”

In the letter sent last week, Andre's intention was also written there.

Ryouma already knew what the other side thinks and wanted.

And today he only came to confirm Ryouma's decision to Andre.

Thus, there was no need to say unnecessary words.

“Y-Yes. That is correct. The demi-human we had sent the other day was the proof of our sincerity.”

“Sincerity huh?... I see I see...”

“To be honest, that one article was very hard to get. Because there was a barrier around their village, we have no choice but to wait and catch the one who came out of the barrier...”

Even if he said they needed to wait for one to come out of the barrier, this place was a Wortenia peninsula where monsters wander around.

In order for them to wait for their prey to come out, a lot of labor was needed.

“I see, it was an article that needed a lot of work to get huh... I see I see...”

Ryouma nodded his head while smiling.

Just to make sure, Andre had emphasized the amount of hard work they needed to do to give him such an article.

The more he emphasized the danger, he judged that it would've increased the other side impression toward their gift.

This was a trick that Andre had gained from his life as a merchant.

If one wanted to sell goods at a high price, one should explain how valuable the item and also explain how much effort spent just to get the item.

“Such valuable thing... I see I can understand everyone's feeling...”

Ryouma nodded his head toward Andre's appeal.

“Ooh, T-Then?!”

Toward Ryouma's respond, Andre replied while smiling in delight.

That was a smile when one was conscious that they got the result as one had wanted.

(Just like Luida said, he is a man after all... It was the right decision to give him that...)

No, rather than conscious, Andre had already convinced that they had gotten what they had wanted.

If not, there was no reason for Mikoshiba Ryouma to come personally.

But he came today. Andre thought of that as a fact that their plan had proceeded accordingly. -

However, such thought was shattered.

By Ryouma who said the next words with a cold smile on his face...

“Indeed, you guys shall die...”

The moment Ryouma said those words, Laura and Sara's swords beheaded Andre's head.

Because it was too unexpected, Andre was unable to respond.



“Well then, shall we begin? You guys understood what to do right?”

Ryouma asked the sisters who were looking at Andre's corpse with cold eyes.

“Yes.”

“Do it!”

Ryouma commanded the Marfisto sisters to execute their plan.

[[O fragment of the sun, O heaven-sent child of fire, thou the son of the god of fire, thou shalt purify the sin under the heaven.]]

As the sisters chant their spells, their chakra wheel started moving, and their Prana roared.

[[Fire God's heavenly flame, Burning pillar!]]

With the last phrase, the sisters flung their hand against the ground.

At that moment, the earth roared, burning pillars broke through the ceiling of the mansion.

Chapter 31

Heartless Fire 5

Daytime Day 25th, 4th month, the Year 2813, western continent calendar.

Pillars of fire blew up from the center of the town spread out under their eyes.

It was the flame signal that everyone standing on the cliffs surrounding the town had waited for. -

A man who had his face covered with a black mask stepped forward in silent toward Sakuya.

Maybe because she felt his presence getting closer to her, Sakuya turned around her body.

“I know... Has everyone ready yet?”

The black shadow responded to Sakuya's words by nodding his head, they all wore kimono with its sleeves being tied by Tasuki, and on their belt, small flower vases were being tied.

It was not something that usually would draw attention.

The vase body was a big round and the vase neck was thin, it was ordinary porcelain vase one can find anywhere.

However, two things were different from the ordinary.

And that two things were that instead of flowers, there were rags being packed inside the vase.

And the other one was the number of those vases.

There were 10 vases hung on their belt using string. -

Since there were 20 men here, there were 200 vases with unknown use.

There must be some reason for them bringing those things around but, if others who didn't understand that saw them like this, they might unintentionally burst into laughter.

However, everyone present here didn't felt shy looking like that.

On the contrary, their gaze felt cold.

They understood properly what they about to do and why they did it as well.

(At the beginning, I don't understand why he explained the detail of the mission to us though...)

For those with authority, it would've been too much of time-consuming to explain each and every detail every time they about to do something.

Indeed that was what usually happened to Sakuya when she got an order from her clan.

If the elders order her to do something, then she just had to carry it out.

It was unnecessary for her to ask about the reason and why she had to do the job, and it was not like she had the right to ask either.

However, this time was different.

Ryouma clearly explained the mission purpose and necessity to Sakuya and Genou and to the other soldiers via Lione.

It was not like the ninjas felt dissatisfaction toward the current situation either.

(But then, the other's fighting spirit, it feels different...)

Their way of calmly erasing their presence was still the same.

But from their perspective, with a clear objective in mind, it had enchanted their physiological state of mind, which manage to drive them harder to plunge into the battlefield.

(But well, I guess it was natural for them to feel this way... Since we finally got ourselves our own city, no one wants someone to touch it... Not even this country's

Queen, Queen Lupis...)

Inside Sakuya's mind, the scene of the conference that was held the other day crossed.

On that day, seven men and women are sitting around a big round table inside a room.

An expression of confusion appeared on the men and women after they heard Ryouma's explanation.

“This is the reason why I called everyone... I'm very sorry for disturbing everyone's schedule. Especially Sakuya...”

“Eh? No. It is alright... Besides I've already pre-arranged for some people to take over the job for the guard duty...”

While she shook her head, Sakuya responded Ryouma's words.

Sakuya had been granted the task to exterminated the pirates, and just the other day their scout team had managed to locate the pirates' hideout.

She had conducted a thorough reconnaissance, examined the number of boats and personnel, the topography of the pirates' town in detail, afterward she just needs to carry out Ryouma's order.

By the time she had almost finished her preparation, an order arrived, she was ordered by Ryouma to immediately return.



“So then... Ryouma-sama, what are we going to do? Are we going to recognize the pirates?”

It was then Lione who answered Sakuya's question.

“Regarding that... Won't that be a hard thing to do? Although they are obedient right now, if we do something like that, those children might grow some dissatisfaction you know?”

“That would be natural... After all, because of those pirates plundering the villages and towns their parents and siblings ended up getting killed, and they themselves were being sold as slaves. No matter how much they feel grateful after being released from

the status of slaves, the grudge inside their hearts won't easily disappear, we definitely can't do this..."

Toward Bolts statement, everyone nodded their head.

All slaves had been released and in exchange, they had become Ryouma's soldiers.

However, the reason why they had become slaves does not disappear because of it.

Furthermore, because their current situation was good, the bitter past should be more profound inside their mind.

"But still, it is really regrettable that we have to discard the pirates' war potential. The assumption that we have to exterminate the pirates is because they might not obey us. But since we already have those guys allegiance, how about we use their war potential?"

Toward Genou's remark, everyone was silent.

No one could deny his words.

Not only those pirates had value as a maritime power.

They could be used for securing control of the sea area, they also had other useful values that can be used.

Regardless of the future prospects, neither agricultural lands nor fishing ground had existed within the current Wortenia peninsula, the only things that can be regarded as a source of revenue were to sell materials obtained from the monsters, because there was no option to sell the demi-humans as slaves after all.

"That might be true but... If that is the case, are we going to ignore the soldiers' dissatisfaction?"

If they think about the immediate interest, it was not bad to pardon those pirates.

However, when one was to think about the long-term policy, conflict might occurs between the soldiers and the pirates.

Although it won't happen immediately, it might happen in the future.

Under this kind of unfavorable condition he was in, Ryouma only strength was the quality and high loyalty that his soldiers had.

Although the magic art they had learned was not that high grade, the quality itself was high. Recently they had begun to teach writing and reading to the soldiers

Being released from slavery had made them strongly loyal toward Ryouma.

But after given pardon to the pirates, that loyalty might be ended up getting destroyed.

This problem was the most important concern for Bolts and Lione who lead those soldiers.

“I have no intention of receiving their allegiance you know?”

A low cold voice echoed inside the room.

“Are you sure?”

Genou watched Ryouma's complexion fearfully.

Truthfully, Genou had no intention of sticking to his opinion.

It was Ryouma's job to make the final decision, and because they understood that they supplement Ryouma's thought by giving him their consideration and opinion.

“Yes, I'm sure... It is impossible for us to accept them, no matter what... After all, they are atrocious criminals...”

This was not because of sentiment or other consideration.

No matter how cheap life can be in this world, it did not mean that this world had no law.

It was not because whether or not it was appropriate, but it was because a country could not exist without law.

The Wortenia peninsula was formally a territory of the Rozeria Kingdom.

Naturally, under the law of the kingdom of Rozeria, pirates were recognized as criminals.

Furthermore, piracy was punishable by death.

And not just their individual as pirates, the capital punishment also fell to their family members.

Their punishment was heavier compared to ordinary murder because pirates had harmed other people on a daily basis for their own benefits.

Moreover, it would have been hard for a nation to maintain security without showing and convince the people that they uphold the law.

Things such as mercy and pardon were greatly influenced by times, education and living environment.

If this was Japan, such law would have been too severe, but in this world, it was a normal law. If the nation were unskillfully showing mercy, the people might instead condemn the national decision.

Even if the pirates have the intention of turning a new leaf, for the people in this world their existence was worthless and there was no reason for the nation to forgive them.

And the family who had lived using the bloody money the pirates had earned also bear the same sins.

Of course, it was possible for Ryouma to ignore the law by using the autonomy right he had gained from Lupis as a shield, but then such decision would've created unnecessary conflict with his people and the neighboring aristocrats.

No matter how much powerful Ryouma was, it was too risky for Ryouma to make such decision with the present situation where he was just an upstart nobleman.

“I have the responsibility to maintain the security the moment this territory become mine. Although we just begin and not yet gone anywhere, it would be hard for me to take responsibility for the past if I accept them.”

It was a land that had been neglected for many years, and because ruling it was difficult no one said anything but, if the current situation was left as it is, all past responsibility will be charged to Ryouma.

Of course, that could also be regarded as natural.

It was regarded as being neglected because no one held responsible for it in the past,

but now, since Mikoshiba Ryouma had become the person in charge, Ryouma must hold the responsibility.

“Well, I do mention various reason but, to be frank, I hate them...”

Ryouma said those words and laughed.

He understood the pirates' circumstance.

Those people might not want to be pirates in the first place.

They might have been victims.

That was why there was still room for sympathy.

However, they can only claim the right as victim toward the perpetrators who hurt them.

It was never okay to harm unrelated general citizen just because they are victims.

Psychologically, it was impossible to accept the pirates.

“That's why, I decided to annihilate them. Is there any objection?”

A cold and sharp gaze strikes all the surrounding people sitting around the roundtable.

At that moment, the destiny of the pirates had been decided.



“Sakuya-sama, the order please...”

Sakuya's mind returned to the current situation after she heard the man voice.

(I need to focus...)

In term of shogi, the situation was already a checkmate.

For the pirates, there was no way left for them to escape.

However, it did not mean Sakuya and the others can relax their guard.

Sakuya nodded her head lightly, then she raised her hand high and swing it down.

“Disperse... We have not much time. Half join with grandfather and quickly secure the target! The rest come with me. Until the next signal, no one shall retreat!”

Sakuya and the other ninjas immediately start running just like arrows being released from the bow.

Since Sakuya had carefully elaborated the plan previously, there was no reason for her to say anything more...

They silently jumped out off the cliffs with rope in their hands tied to the thick trees.

引き絞られた弓から矢が放たれるが如く、
咲夜の命に忍達は静かに駆け出した。



The town without a name that Henry had created have some natural defenses.

The town was surrounded by high cliffs from three sides, and a large sea spread on the north side.

On the cliff's side, there was only one small stair with a width that can only be used for one person to pass.

Originally it was prepared in case they need to fight against the monsters inside the forest in case they perform a frontal attack.

And there were no other means to perform a frontal attack from the forest other than going down using the stairs.

However, that was the story if the method was a frontal attack.

Although it was impossible for those monsters, for human, there were many ways for them to get down from the cliffs.

One of them was going down by using ropes...

Although there was no equipment such as karabiner like in the modern times, for the people of this world it was easy to slide down the rope.

They easily slide down from the cliffs just using one single rope.

“Bolts-san, I leave that side to you...”

After she murmured that words, Sakuya also jumped off...



“Young master... I have kept you waiting...” <TLN: First time Genou called Ryouma as Young Master, maybe the author's mistake, but I will keep it as it is.>

After Ryouma took care of Andre, Genou quietly appeared.

All of his attire was black.

There were no arts that can be used to see who was the man behind the ninja's clothes.

However, from his low voice and the glint of his eyes Ryouma knew that it was Genou.

“Did you found it?”

Genou nodded his head quietly in respond to Ryouma's question.

“Of course... We already secured the target, right now we're moving the target toward the harbor.”

Genou's role was to find the captured demi-human.

He and the others had swam into the bay last night.

People said that a Shinobi always had a comprehensive skill, but it seems they truly capable of doing anything.

It was not impossible for them to swim in the middle of the night.

And after Genou and his subordinates find the prisoner they quietly waited for Ryouma to make his move.

“As expected of you. If that the case then, shall we move to the next stage and quickly heads toward the dock? It seems like Sakuya and the others have started their move...”

Outside the window of the building he was in, Ryouma could see that a fire rising here and there, throwing the town into confusion.

“The stairs on the cliffs has Bolts-dono and the others standing guard... As long we take care of that, there was no other way for the pirates to escape.”

“Good, everything is just as planned.”

A cold smile appeared on Ryouma's face.

Ryouma himself does not like murder.

However, if it was necessary, even if he did not like it, he will not hesitate to do it.

(Burn this sinful town! Turn everything into ashes.....)

This town was being built by weak people stepping on another weak people.

These people were those who survived by doing all of those crimes.

They were corrupted and distorted so much that there was no salvation for them.

This was a town that should never have existed.

The people living in this town were an existence that should have never be let alive.

This mission was for the sake of Ryouma to move forward.

(I will definitely become strong...!)

The hatred inside his heart got heated.

It was his hatred toward this crazy world. -

Ryouma, Genou and the Marfisto sisters walked into the town where black smoke swirled around.

In order to finish everything.

Chapter 32

Daytime, Day 12th, 6th Month, the Year 2813, Western continent calendar.

The downtown area of the fortified city Epiroz.

A man entered a love hotel located in the back of the dirty alley.

The man throws a gold coin to the inn receptionist in silent.

The owner of the inn who was doing the bookkeeping while sitting on the chair slightly lifted his eyes as if urged the man to go toward the second floor.

There was no need for the man to ask.

Since they already arranged everything beforehand.

“Room 204...”

The owner of the inn tells the number of the room when the man began to climb the stairs.

After told the man the necessary information, the innkeeper turned his face away. -

In this line of business, the necessary mannerism was to not see, not heard and not questioning.

Many visitors to this place were people who wish to avoid public eyes.

Despite being a love hotel, there were also men and women who met here not to have sex.

However, for the inn owner, as long they pay the money, what the visitors do was inconsequential.

If one wanted to live long, one should never investigate the customers.

Forget about a cat, the demon called curiosity could kill human easily.

After putting the gold coin into the wallet, the inn owner turned his eyes toward the

book once again.

If someone were to ask who was the man just now, the inn owner would answer, 'There's no reason for a customer to come and stay inside this kind of inn, no?'



"Long time no see, your Excellency, Baron Mikoshiba. I heard the matters regarding the pirates have been being dealt safely. Congratulation..."

When the man stepped into the room, Simone rose from her chair and gently lowered her head.

She wore a red dress with large breasts opening, accompanied by the red lipstick on her lips.

The dress had a large slit, and a slim white leg jumps into Ryouma's eyes from the gap.

Today she dressed and looked sensual just like a prostitute that can be found somewhere.

Even the people who knew her face won't be able to associate her present appearance to that of the chairman of the Christoph firm.

No matter how one looked at it, Simone right now looked like a sexy prostitute.



“Indeed, it's been a long time, Simone... As expected of you, you have very keen ears...”

While he opened his hood, Ryouma showed a bitter smile on his face toward Simone who had already obtained the information that he had just reported to the Earl and his wife before he came here.

“I've heard rumors that floating around since a month ago. Besides, the damage done by the pirates also have been drastically reduced. Furthermore, having Baron-sama come to Epiroz city is also the proof...”

As she said that, Simone returned Ryouma smile with her gentle smile.

One day, the story about a town or villages being attacked by pirates had stopped.

As a merchant with a good brain, she immediately gathered information on what had happened.

Besides, Simone had been asked by Ryouma to act as a merchant and a spy for him. -

After she linked the information she had gathered and Mikoshiba Ryouma who had appeared in the city of Epiroz, such conclusion naturally appeared inside her mind.

“But still, Simone, it seems like you have chosen an amazing place to meet huh...?”

After she heard Ryouma's words accompanied with a bitter smile on his face, Simone showed a mischievous smile just like a child whose mischief had been succeeded.

In the present stage, it was not easy for the two people to meet, since Earl Salzberg would show unnecessary caution if he finds out about it.

Following that pattern, Simone then chooses this love hotel located in the back of a dirty alley to escape other people eyes.

Although Ryouma held the lowest rank of nobility, and Simone was the chairman of the Christoph firm, who previously also served as the chairman of the Epiroz city business alliance.

For normal people, this place was too shabby for this two man and woman met.

“This place is just right for a clandestine meeting between men and women after all...”

It was certainly a place to avoid public gaze.

It was located in the back of a dirty alley.

It was a dark place, but if one were to have money, everything can be done here...

It was a convenient place for Simone and Ryouma who wanted to avoid the Earl Salzberg' watchful eyes.

Even if Ryouma was being traced, he can make as many excuses as he wanted, such as he met a prostitute here as a customer.

If he said that he was going to buy a woman here, that alone can become a reason why he wanted to hide his face.

Just for the record, Simone was supposedly lying at home due to illness for these past several days. -

“So then? Have you managed to prepare what I had asked?”

Inside, Ryouma immediately cut the case despite being overwhelmed by the mysterious sexy charm that Simone gave away.

He could not stare at her figure forever.

After all, he had come here despite the risk because it was necessary for the two of them to meet directly and talked to each other.

“We already bought two ships and currently the ships were anchored at the port city of Mispoz.”

Simone then took out the map from the bag placed under her chair and spread the map on the table.

Mispoz was a port city located at the eastern end of the Kingdom of Ernestgora.

It cannot be compared to the Fulzad city, the largest trading city of the western continent.

While Ryouma building his base within the Wortenia peninsula, Simone had begun preparing the merchant ships at Mispoz city.

“Two ships huh... How big was it?”

“It was the largest galleon type ship that was currently being sold. All the seafarers we hired are skilled and also has the experience of naval battle.”

“I see, it seems like you managed to think a lot of things eh?”

“Well, it was because I also considering converting the ship to a warship after all.”

Simone flatly responded to Ryouma's question.

Despite purchasing the ship using the Christoph firm money, she told Ryouma that she was willing using the ship as a warship in an emergency situation.

Ryouma had a smile on his face hearing what she had said.

“You're such a great risk taker indeed...”

Ryouma and Simone have already had a relationship where they both shared the same fate.

The words Simone had said that she was ready to use the trade ships as warships was a proof of how much she had prepared for every situation.

Toward Ryouma's remark, Simone quietly smiled and directed her gaze at Ryouma.

“How about the harbor?”

They both had pre-arranged their individual role.

Simone role was to procures ships and secures trade channels.

While Ryouma's role was to eliminate the pirates and constructs the harbor.

Although the elimination of the pirates had already finished, she hadn't yet heard anything regarding the port.

She did not doubt Ryouma's ability, but only a few months had passed since he entered the peninsula.

It was natural for Simone to felt uneasy.

“No problem. There's already a city complete with the city walls. The only thing left is only to transport the people in...”

Simone responded to Ryouma's answer by staring at him silently.

Her eyes trembled.

(It seems like he really made it huh...)

Simone who was unable to detect any lie from Ryouma's words can't help it but heaved a heavy sigh.

The man currently in front of her, had managed to build his base in a mere few months since he arrived within a territory filled with monsters.

(This person, truly...)

To express what inside Simone's mind and heart, it can be said as awe rather than fear.

Fear would lead someone to exclusion but, awe would lead that person to obedience.

One can't say that Ryouma had a beautiful figure.

His appearance was that of an ordinary young man with a good physique.

However, Simone knew.

That he had managed to obliterate the pirates.

She might only have a fragmented information but she knew for sure, that the man in front of her had annihilated the pirates and all of their families, none managed to survive.

Such was the information she had managed to gather when she sent some merchant to the peninsula.

The pirates' town that was being created in the cove was burnt to the ground, all the burning buildings and corpse was left just like that.

The moment the merchant saw the scene where birds eating the burned corpse, he said it was looked like hell.

She thought that the Pirates' end was too brutal, but at the same time, she also thought it was a natural end for them.

Although one can't say to the others to follow the law strictly, one cannot ignore the law completely either.

There were certainly unreasonable and irrational laws but, on the other hands, there were also laws that was indispensable for maintaining society.

Had Ryouma show sympathy to the pirates, Simone may have stopped working together with him.

The pirates were certainly a great fighting strength.

However, many of her subordinates lost their family members by the pirates.

Those who experienced such tragedy won't forgive those pirates.

Had Ryouma decided to make them a friend, it was clear that some serious trouble would happen.

However, Ryouma chosen to annihilate them.

He might have been a kind man who released the slaves but, he also a man who could make a ruthless decision if necessary.

A man that can hang the risk and merit on balance with icy cold heart.

(I was right huh...)

Such feeling sprung out inside Simone's heart.

Turn out, the straw she was grabbing in a last attempt to survive after losing everything was not a straw but a sturdy rope.

One cannot lead the people with just by being kind or heartless.

Only the one who was able to do both can stand at the top. <TLN: This is sarcasm to the princess decision isn't it?>

(A supreme ruler...)

An electric shock ran through her back when that words crossed her mind.

“What's wrong?”

Ryouma asked Simone such question after she fell silent while kept looking at him.

“Ah, no, pardon my rudeness...”

“Are you alright?”

“Yes...”

Ryouma then continued their talk while feeling doubtful toward Simone who lowered her head for some reason.

“Well, I've already finished building the city, afterward we only need the residence...”

The city had already been build, ready to accept new residence at any time.

“I understand. I will bring the slaves more quickly from Mispoz.”

“Good, have you gathered them according to my request?”

“Of course. Healthy young men and women, ages around ten to fifteen years old. We have secured them...”

Rather than buying the slaves from Epiroz, it was better for them to buy the slaves from Zalda or Ernestgora, that way it won't cause unnecessary attention from Earl Salzburg.

That was also the same reason why Simone had bought the ships at Mispoz.

“Good then. Are fangs and leather enough for the payment?”

Responded to Ryouma's words, Simone nodded her head silently.

The fangs and leathers obtained from the monsters within the peninsula were traded with a high price.

If one can hunt them on a regular basis, such monsters' fangs and leathers can become

important special products.

“There's a rumor that you guys had met with demi-human, is that true?”

It was a casual interest-oriented question but, Simone question caused Ryouma's complexion to change greatly.

“Where did you heard that?”

Simone was unable to breathe for a moment.

Just like looking at the enemy, Ryouma's eyes were cold and sharp.

After some time had passed.

Ryouma's eyes showed that he had regained his calm once more.

“Ah, my bad... Since the situation regarding them is a little bit complicated...”

Noticed that Simone felt overwhelmed, Ryouma apologized while showing a wry smile.

He had no intention of scaring her, but due to Simone's question, he had unintentionally ended up being cautious.

“Just what had happened? Did you really meet them? The demi-humans?”

Simone took a deep breath and asked her question once more.

For Simone, the existence of demi-humans can be said as extinct creatures.

Although it can be said that some people think differently, but the majority of people living on the western continent would have the same opinion as her.

Though sometimes she heard rumors that the demi-humans survived and lived within the corner of the western continent, such story was only a rumors without proof.

She herself didn't expect Ryouma to encounter the demi-humans for real.

She had intended to make it as a trivial topic.

Just to provide some short talk.

Although she had only thought of it lightly, looking at Ryouma's attitude, that rumor was not just a mere rumor after all.

Ryouma began to talk while having a big sigh toward Simone who opened her eyes wide listening to him.

It was a story that cannot be left unsettled.

As Ryouma's story progressed, Simone face who was quietly listening gradually turn dark.

Because it was a story about a deep hatred the demi-humans hold toward the humans...

Chapter 33

Night time, Day 12th, 6th Month, the Year 2813.

The moment Yuria opened the door, she instinctively frowned.

The moment she entered the room, a vulgar smell entered her nose, aphrodisiacs fragrance scattered here and there.

He used the incense imported from the central continent, that was said to have an effect just like viagra.

It was obvious as to what had happened inside the room.

Earl Salzberg seemed to have enjoyed his entertainment gaudily.

The Earl's disheveled self who was in the middle of drinking wine while sitting on the sofa were a proof as to how intense the act was.

On the corner of the room a maid was lying on the floor, after Yuria told her to fix her appearance, the maid immediately left the room.

Because what she was about to talk with the Earl were something that the servants should not listen.



“Dear... You sure have a lot of fun huh?”

Yuria sat on the sofa and gazed at her husband eyes who were sitting in front of her.

Even though it was the gaze of his wife, the Earl's expression did not change at all.

Furthermore, his wife did not seem to be angry either. She only felt a slight disgust. -

“Fuuuh... This is the only way to entertain myself... Fumu, this wine is delicious. How about you have some?”

Earl Salzberg drinks his wine once again while relaxed his posture.

The color of the wine remained inside the glass was red.

It was the finest grape wine harvested in the kingdom of Ernestgora, it was aged finely after being kept under proper temperature control.

The Earl was in a good mood enough that he opened the wine bottle that he had regarded as a secret treasure of his.

“Geez... To be honest, I can't feel optimistic like you...”

Hearing his offer being declined, The Earl laughed at Yuria who spoke some words while frowned.

The Earl knew what his wife was worried about.

“Is that so? To be honest, I think the future would be more interesting now...”

A visage of a strong man appeared inside the Earl's mind.

The Earl's expression looked like a person who looked down on someone from high above.

Then the scene where he met Mikoshiba Ryouma during the daytime appeared inside his mind.

“That man was really easy to use... It seems like the subjugation of the pirates went smooth as well. He is more usable than that stupid Queen...”

“I know that but... Do be careful when you play with a sharp weapon like him since it might turn against you one day, you know?”

Within Yuria's words, one can feel her worry that the sharp weapon might turn against them one day.

“I certainly won't deny that. However, I can eliminate him anytime I want. That's why I should use him while I still can, don't you agree?”

He sounded like someone overflowed with greed.

But, despite that, his head was filled with cold calculation.

Being able to obliterate the pirates was a proof that Mikoshiba Ryouma had the capacity to maintain security.

Even though monsters were still wondering about, people would still gather if the one ruling managed to maintain public order.

In other words, it was obvious that the development of Wortenia peninsula was possible.

And unexplored territory holds many possibilities.

Despite the territory belonged to another person, Epiroz which situated near the Wortenia peninsula still can expect considerable benefits.

Earl Salzberg had never thought of getting rid Mikoshiba Ryouma.

He understood that it was better for him to use Ryouma than getting rid of him.

Just by having Ryouma kept the peninsula at peace, the Earl would be able to reduce his military expenditure which usually being used for countering the monsters invasion.

Although it won't completely make it disappear, it will without a doubt reduce some of the burdens.

Along with the great potential which the peninsula hold in the future, the current situation was a great advantage for him.

Given such situation, the Earl had no reason to eliminate Mikoshiba Ryouma at this stage, and he also did not wish to break the current flow.

Yuria nodded in silent while listening to the Earl's words.

She did not have the reason to overturn the Earl's decision...



Two months had passed since the time Mikoshiba Ryouma obliterated the pirates.

As the season changed into summer and the scorching sun was shining on the sky, a group of 100 people headed toward the south while opening the forest.

Those people were divided into three units.

One unit had the responsibility of cutting off the trees, and harden the soil.

One unit was responsible for paving the road with stones.

The last unit was responsible for their guard.

Their work was very quick and meticulous.

Having understood each individual capability, they managed to share the works among themselves.

“Start the chant!”

““O, Mother Earth, with your ability of solidifying, defend the child with thy arm, Stone Wall!”“

Followed Lione's command, ten soldiers finished their chants and hit their palm on the ground.

It was a low ranked magic arts, belonged to the Earth magic.

Normally it was used for protecting the soldiers from the enemy's arrows and magic arts, but right now, they had used it not for to protect themselves.

“Now, dig it up!”

Following the order, the soldiers who had strengthened their body with magic art beforehand quickly hooked ropes over the raised stone wall(2 meters in width and 3 meters in height) and pulled it down.

Combined with the part where the stone wall was buried, the total of height the stone wall had become 5 meters.

Then they carefully laid down the 10 cm thick stone wall on the ground. -

After five stone wall lined neatly, a huge road appeared there.

“Good! Let's take a break for an hour now. The guard's troops can take some rest in a shift!”

The atmosphere around the group had become relaxed after they heard Lione's words.

“Fuuh... With this we have finished half of the planned work, I think?”

Ten days had passed since the day they started this work.

Looking back toward the direction they had come from, a straight paved road can be seen.

They had already built 30 kilometers of paved road.

There was no need for them to fix the shape of the stone, and the width and height were also automatically kept the same. The only thing they needed to do was to line them up.

And because it was only a low-level magic art, it was easier for them to acquire and the Prana consumption was also small.

Given the labor and expenses involved, it was terrifyingly efficient. -

“Does the fortification going well?”

Suddenly she heard someone talked, Lione turned her head and she saw Mike talked with a smile on his face.

“That matters have been left to Bolts. There should be no problem.”

“I thought so. Fortunately, we're blessed with a good weather right now... Although I think it was also too good...”

Mike said those words while looking at the sky. -

Although it did not obstruct their construction works, working under the strong sunlight was proven to be quite hard.

“I think we can finish our works in ten days?”

“I think so. Since we already finished half of the work...”

Lione nodded her head answering Mike's question while looking at the road paved with stone in front of her.

They had calculated that 20 days would be needed to open the forest and created 50 kilometers of paved road.

“Still, being able to do all this less than a month... As expected of the young master plan...”

If they wanted to do the construction the normal way, they would've usually needed more than a thousand people.

Beginning with securing the stone materials, it also takes time to shape and carry the stone to the intended place.

It was a work that would cost a considerable money and time.

Indeed, in this world, if one were to do a road construction on the scale that Lione was doing now, one would have needed a huge budget and a couple of years to finish.

Having them finished the work in less than a month, Ryouma idea can be said to have overturned the common sense of this world.

“Well, the city also already took its form, the only problem left was regarding the Elf.”

“It's not going well in that regard huh?”

Mike turned a questioning gaze toward Lione.

“Well, I wonder about that? Those guys hatred toward the humans were quite high after all... Well, Boya will do something one way or another.”

Having said those words, Lione turned her gaze toward the northern sky.

“Furthermore, that child...”

The small muttering from Lione did not enter Mike's ears.

For the time being, Mikoshiba Ryouma devoted himself to the development of the Wortenia peninsula.

Until the day when the cloud of war start approached from the west...



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